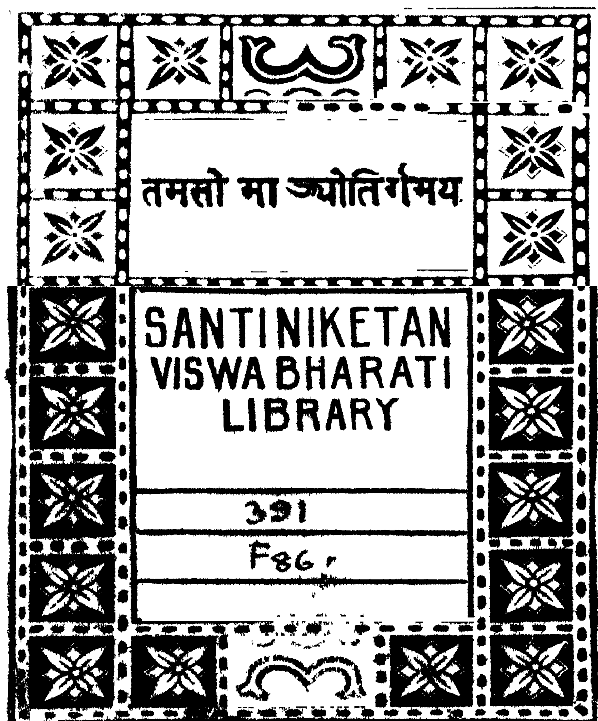


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PSYCHE'S TASK

AND THE

SCOPE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY



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PSYCHE'S TASK

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING
THE INFLUENCE OF SUPERSTITION ON
THE GROWTH OF INSTITUTIONS

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE SCOPE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

AN INAUGURAL LECTURE

BY

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Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds, which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixt.

MILTON, *Areopagitica.*

Il ne faut pas croire cependant qu'un mauvais principe vicie radicalement une institution, ni même qu'il y fasse tout le mal qu'il porte dans son sein. Rien ne fausse plus l'histoire que la logique: quand l'esprit humain s'est arrêté sur une idée, il en tire toutes les conséquences possibles, lui fait produire tout ce qu'en effet elle pourrait produire, et puis se la représente dans l'histoire avec tout ce cortège. Il n'en arrive point ainsi; les événements ne sont pas aussi prompts dans leur déductions que l'esprit humain. Il y a dans toutes choses un mélange de bien et de mal si profond, si invincible que, quelque part que vous pénétriez, quand vous descendrez dans les derniers éléments de la société ou de l'âme, vous y trouverez ces deux ordres de faits coexistant, se développant l'un à côté de l'autre et se combattant, mais sans s'exterminer. La nature humaine ne va jamais jusqu'aux dernières limites, ni du mal ni du bien; elle passe sans cesse de l'un à l'autre, se redressant au moment où elle semble le plus près de la chute, faiblissant au moment où elle semble marcher le plus droit.

GUIZOT, *Histoire de la civilisation dans l'Europe*, Cinquième Leçon.

TO

ALL WHO ARE ENGAGED

IN PSYCHE'S TASK

OF SORTING OUT THE SEEDS OF GOOD

FROM THE SEEDS OF EVIL

I DEDICATE THIS DISCOURSE

PREFACE

THE substance of the following discourse was lately read at an evening meeting of the Royal Institution in London, and most of it was afterwards delivered in the form of lectures to my class at Liverpool. It is now published in the hope that it may call attention to a neglected side of superstition and stimulate enquiry into the early history of those great institutions which still form the framework of modern society. If it should turn out that these institutions have sometimes been built on rotten foundations, it would be rash to conclude that they must all come down. Man is a very curious animal, and the more we know of his habits the more curious does he appear. He may be the most rational of the beasts, but certainly he is the most absurd. Even the saturnine wit of Swift, unaided by a knowledge of savages, fell far short of the reality in his attempt to set human folly in a strong light. Yet the odd thing is that in spite, or perhaps by virtue, of his absurdities man moves steadily upwards; the more we learn of his past history the more groundless does the old theory of his degeneracy prove to be. From false premises he often arrives at sound conclusions: from a chimerical theory he deduces a salutary practice. This discourse will have served a useful purpose if it illustrates a few

of the ways in which folly mysteriously deviates into wisdom, and good comes out of evil. It is a mere sketch of a vast subject. Whether I shall ever fill in these bald outlines with finer strokes and deeper shadows must be left to the future to determine. The materials for such a picture exist in abundance; and if the colours are dark, they are yet illuminated, as I have tried in this essay to point out, by a ray of consolation and hope.

J. G. FRAZER.

CAMBRIDGE, *February* 1909.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In this edition *Psyche's Task* has been enlarged by fresh illustrative examples and by the discussion of a curious point of savage etiquette, but the substance and the form of the discourse remain unchanged. I have added *The Scope of Social Anthropology*, an inaugural lecture intended to mark out roughly the boundaries of the general study of which *Psyche's Task* aims at setting forth some particular results. There is therefore a certain appropriateness in presenting the two discourses together to the reader.

J. G. F.

CAMBRIDGE, *6th June* 1913.

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PSYCHE'S TASK

I

INTRODUCTION

WE are apt to think of superstition as an unmitigated evil, false in itself and pernicious in its consequences. That it has done much harm in the world, cannot be denied. It has sacrificed countless lives, wasted untold treasures, embroiled nations, severed friends, parted husbands and wives, parents and children, putting swords, and worse than swords between them: it has filled gaols and madhouses with its innocent or deluded victims: it has broken many hearts, embittered the whole of many a life, and not content with persecuting the living it has pursued the dead into the grave and beyond it, gloating over the horrors which its foul imagination has conjured up to appal and torture the survivors. It has done all this and more. Yet the case of superstition, like that of Mr. Pickwick after the revelations of poor Mr. Winkle in the witness-box, can perhaps afford to be placed in a rather better light; and without posing as the Devil's Advocate or appearing before you in a blue flame and sulphureous fumes, I do profess to make out what the charitable might call a plausible plea for a very dubious client. For I propose to prove, or at least make probable, by examples that among certain races and at certain stages of evolution some social institutions which we all, or most of us, believe to be beneficial have partially rested on a basis of superstition. The institutions to which I refer are purely secular or civil. Of religious or ecclesiastical institutions I shall say nothing. It might perhaps be possible to shew that even religion has not wholly escaped the taint or

The dark side of superstition.

The brighter side of superstition.

dispensed with the support of superstition; but I prefer for to-night to confine myself to those civil institutions which people commonly imagine to be bottomed on nothing but hard common sense and the nature of things. While the institutions with which I shall deal have all survived into civilized society and can no doubt be defended by solid and weighty arguments, it is practically certain that among savages, and even among peoples who have risen above the level of savagery, these very same institutions have derived much of their strength from beliefs which nowadays we should condemn unreservedly as superstitious and absurd. The institutions in regard to which I shall attempt to prove this are four, namely, government, private property, marriage, and the respect for human life. And what I have to say may be summed up in four propositions as follows:—

Four propositions to be proved.

I. Among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for government, especially monarchical government, and has thereby contributed to the establishment and maintenance of civil order.

II. Among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for private property and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment.

III. Among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for marriage and has thereby contributed to a stricter observance of the rules of sexual morality both among the married and the unmarried.

IV. Among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for human life and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment.

Preliminary remarks.

Before proceeding to deal with these four propositions separately, I wish to make two remarks, which I beg you will bear in mind. First, in what I have to say I shall confine myself to certain races of men and to certain ages of history, because neither my time nor my knowledge permits me to speak of all races of men and all ages of history. How far the limited conclusions which I shall draw for some races and for some ages are applicable to others must be left to future enquiries to determine. That is my first remark. My second is this. If it can be proved that in certain races and at certain times the institutions

in question have been based partly on superstition, it by no means follows that even among these races they have never been based on anything else. On the contrary, as all the institutions which I shall consider have proved themselves stable and permanent, there is a strong presumption that they rest mainly on something much more solid than superstition. No institution founded wholly on superstition, that is on falsehood, can be permanent. If it does not answer to some real human need, if its foundations are not laid broad and deep in the nature of things, it must perish, and the sooner the better. That is my second remark.

II

GOVERNMENT

Supersti-tion as a prop of govern-ment.

WITH these two cautions I address myself to my first proposition, which is, that among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for government, especially monarchical government, and has thereby contributed to the establishment and maintenance of civil order.

Super-stitious respect for chiefs in Melanesia.

Among many peoples the task of government has been greatly facilitated by a superstition that the governors belong to a superior order of beings and possess certain supernatural or magical powers to which the governed can make no claim and can offer no resistance. Thus Dr. Codrington tells us that among the Melanesians "the power of chiefs has hitherto rested upon the belief in their supernatural power derived from the spirits or ghosts with which they had intercourse. As this belief has failed, in the Banks' Islands for example some time ago, the position of a chief has tended to become obscure; and as this belief is now being generally undermined a new kind of chief must needs arise, unless a time of anarchy is to begin."[1] According to a native Melanesian account, the authority of chiefs rests entirely on the belief that they hold communication with mighty ghosts and possess that supernatural power or *mana*, as it is called, whereby they are able to bring the influence of the ghosts to bear on human life. If a chief imposed a fine, it was paid because the people firmly believed that he could inflict calamity and sickness upon such as resisted him. As soon as any considerable number of his

[1] R. H. Codrington, D.D., *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 46.

subjects began to disbelieve in his influence with the ghosts, his power to levy fines was shaken.[1] It is thus that in Melanesia religious scepticism tends to undermine the foundations of civil society.

Superstitious respect for chiefs in Fiji.

Similarly Mr. Basil Thomson tells us that "the key to the Melanesian system of government is Ancestor-worship. Just as every act in a Fijian's life was controlled by his fear of Unseen Powers, so was his conception of human authority based upon religion." The dead chief was supposed still to watch jealously over his people and to punish them with dearth, storms, and floods, if they failed to bring their offerings to his tomb and to propitiate his spirit. And the person of his descendant, the living chief, was sacred; it was hedged in by a magic circle of taboo and might not even be touched without incurring the wrath of the Unseen. "The first blow at the power of the chiefs was struck unconsciously by the missionaries. Neither they nor the chiefs themselves realized how closely the government of the Fijians was bound up with their religion. No sooner had a missionary gained a foothold in a chief village than the tabu was doomed, and on the tabu depended half the people's reverence for rank. The tabu died hard, as such institutions should do. The first-fruits were still presented to the chief, but they were no longer carried from him to the temple, since their excuse—as an offering to persuade the ancestors to grant abundant increase—had passed away. No longer supported by the priests, the Sacred Chief fell upon evil days"; for in Fiji, as in other places, the priest and the chief, when they were not one and the same person, had played into each other's hands, both knowing that neither could stand firm without the aid of the other.[2]

Superstitious respect for chiefs in Polynesia generally and in New Zealand particularly.

In Polynesia the state of things was similar. There, too, the power of chiefs depended largely on a belief in their supernatural powers, in their relation to ancestral spirits, and in the magical virtue of taboo, which pervaded their persons and interposed between them and common folk an invisible but formidable barrier, to pass which was death. In New Zealand the Maori chiefs were deemed to be living

[1] R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.* p. 52.

[2] Basil Thomson, *The Fijians, a Study of the Decay of Custom* (London, 1908), pp. 57-59, 64, 158.

atuas or gods. Thus the Rev. Richard Taylor, who was for more than thirty years a missionary in New Zealand, tells us that in speaking a Maori chief "assumed a tone not natural to him, as a kind of court language; he kept himself distinct from his inferiors, eating separately; his person was sacred, he had the power of holding converse with the gods, in fact laid claim to being one himself, making the *tapu* a powerful adjunct to obtain control over his people and their goods. Every means were used to acquire this dignity; a large person was thought to be of the highest importance; to acquire this extra size, the child of a chief was generally provided with many nurses, each contributing to his support by robbing their own offspring of their natural sustenance; thus, whilst they were half-starved, miserable-looking little creatures, the chief's child was the contrary, and early became remarkable by its good appearance. Nor was this feeling confined to the body; the chief was an *atua*, but there were powerful and powerless gods; each naturally sought to make himself one of the former; the plan therefore adopted, was to incorporate the spirits of others with their own; thus, when a warrior slew a chief, he immediately gouged out his eyes and swallowed them, the *atua tonga*, or divinity, being supposed to reside in that organ; thus he not only killed the body, but also possessed himself of the soul of his enemy, and consequently the more chiefs he slew, the greater did his divinity become. . . . Another great sign of a chief was oratory—a good orator was compared to the *korimako*, the sweetest singing bird in New Zealand; to enable the young chief to become one, he was fed upon that bird, so that he might the better acquire its qualities, and the successful orator was termed a *korimako*."[1] Again, another writer informs us that the opinions of Maori chiefs "were held in more estimation than those of others, simply because they were believed to give utterance to the thoughts of deified men. No dazzling pageantry hedged them round, but their persons were sacred. . . . Many of them believed themselves inspired;

[1] Rev. Richard Taylor, *Te Ika A Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, Second Edition (London, 1870), pp. 352 *sq.*; as to the *atuas* or gods, see *ib.* pp. 134 *sqq.*

thus Te Heu Heu, the great Taupo chief and priest, shortly before he was swallowed up by a landslip, said to a European missionary: 'Think not that I am a man, that my origin is of the earth. I come from the heavens; my ancestors are all there; they are gods, and I shall return to them.'"[1] So sacred was the person of a Maori chief that it was not lawful to touch him, even to save his life. A chief has been seen at the point of suffocation and in great agony with a fish bone sticking in his throat, and yet not one of his people, who were lamenting around him, dared to touch or even approach him, for it would have been as much as their own life was worth to do so. A missionary, who was passing, came to the rescue and saved the chief's life by extracting the bone. As soon as the rescued man recovered the power of speech, which he did not do for half an hour, the first use he made of it was to demand that the surgical instruments with which the bone had been extracted should be given to him as compensation for the injury done him by drawing his sacred blood and touching his sacred head.[2]

Superstitious fear of contact with Maori chiefs.

Not only the person of a Maori chief but everything that had come into contact with it was sacred and would kill, so the Maoris thought, any sacrilegious person who dared to meddle with it. Cases have been known of Maoris dying of sheer fright on learning that they had unwittingly eaten the remains of a chief's dinner or handled something that belonged to him. For example, a woman, having partaken of some fine peaches from a basket, was told that they had come from a tabooed place. Immediately the basket dropped from her hands and she cried out in agony that the *atua* or godhead of the chief, whose divinity had been thus profaned, would kill her. That happened in the afternoon, and next day by twelve o'clock she was dead.[3] Similarly a chief's tinder-box has proved fatal to several men; for having found it and lighted their pipes with it

[1] A. S. Thomson, M.D., *The Story of New Zealand* (London, 1859), i. 95 *sq.*

[2] Rev. W. Yate, *An Account of New Zealand* (London, 1835), pp. 104 *sq.*, note.

[3] W. Brown, *New Zealand and its Aborigines* (London, 1845), p. 76. Compare *Old New Zealand*, by a Pakeha Maori (London, 1884), pp. 96 *sq.*

they actually expired of terror on learning to whom it belonged.[1] Hence a considerate chief would throw away where it could not be found any garment or mat for which he had no further use, lest one of his subjects should find it and be struck dead by the shock of its inherent divinity. For the same reason he would never blow a fire with his mouth; for his sacred breath would communicate its sanctity to the fire, and the fire would pass it on to the meat that might be cooked on it, and the meat would carry it into the stomach of the eater, and he would die.[2] Thus the divinity which hedged a Maori chief was a devouring flame which shrivelled up and consumed whatever it touched. No wonder that such men were implicitly obeyed.

Superstitious respect for chiefs and kings in Tonga and Tahiti.

In the rest of Polynesia the state of things was similar. For example, the natives of Tonga in like manner believed that if any one fed himself with his own hands after touching the sacred person of a superior chief, he would swell up and die; the sanctity of the chief, like a virulent poison, infected the hands of his inferior, and, being communicated through them to the food, proved fatal to the eater, unless he disinfected himself by touching the chief's feet in a particular way.[3] When a king of Tahiti entered on office he was girded with a sacred girdle of red feathers, which not only raised him to the highest earthly station, but identified him with the gods.[4] Henceforth "every thing in the least degree connected with the king or queen—the cloth they wore, the houses in which they dwelt, the canoes in which they voyaged, the men by whom they were borne when they journeyed by land, became sacred—and even the sounds in the language, composing their names, could no longer be appropriated to ordinary significations. Hence, the original names of most of the objects with which they were familiar, have from time to time undergone considerable alterations. The ground on which they even accidentally trod, became sacred; and the dwelling under which they might enter, must for ever after be vacated

[1] Rev. R. Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 164.

[2] Rev. R. Taylor, *op. cit.* pp. 164, 165.

[3] W. Mariner, *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, Second Edition (London, 1818), i. 141 *sq.* note, 434, note, ii. 82 *sq.*, 222 *sq.*

[4] W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, Second Edition (London, 1832–1836), iii. 108.

by its proprietors, and could be appropriated only to the use of these sacred personages. No individual was allowed to touch the body of the king or queen; and every one who should stand over them, or pass the hand over their heads, would be liable to pay for the sacrilegious act with the forfeiture of his life. It was on account of this supposed sacredness of person that they could never enter any dwellings, excepting those that were specially dedicated to their use, and prohibited to all others; nor might they tread on the ground in any part of the island but their own hereditary districts."[1]

Superstitious fear of contact with kings in Africa and the Malay region.

In like manner the Cazembes, in the interior of Angola, regarded their king as so holy that no one could touch him without being killed by the magical power which emanated from his sacred person; however, any one who had accidentally or necessarily come into personal contact with his Majesty could escape death by touching the king's hands in a special manner.[2] Similar beliefs are current in the Malay region, where the theory of the king as the Divine Man is said to be held perhaps as strongly as in any other part of the world. "Not only is the king's person considered sacred, but the sanctity of his body is believed to communicate itself to his regalia, and to slay those who break the royal taboos. Thus it is firmly believed that any one who seriously offends the royal person, who touches (even for a moment) or who imitates (even with the king's permission) the chief objects of the regalia, or who wrongfully makes use of any of the insignia or privileges of royalty, will be *kĕna daulat*, *i.e.* struck dead, by a quasi-electric discharge of that Divine Power which the Malays suppose to reside in the king's person, and which is called *daulat* or Royal Sanctity."[3]

Marvellous powers attributed to rajahs by Malays and Dyaks.

Further, the Malays firmly believe that the king possesses a personal influence over the works of nature, such as the growth of the crops and the bearing of fruit-trees.[4] Some of the Hill Dyaks of Sarawak

[1] W. Ellis, *op. cit.* iii. 101 *sq.*; J. Wilson, *Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean* (London, 1799), pp. 329 *sq.*

[2] *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Erdkunde* (Berlin), vi. (1856) pp. 398 *sq.*; F. T. Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa* (London, 1861), ii. 251 *sq.*

[3] W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), pp. 23 *sq.*

[4] W. W. Skeat, *op. cit.* p. 36.

used to bring their seed-rice to Rajah Brooke to be fertilized by him; and once when the rice-crops of a tribe were thin, the chief remarked that it could not be otherwise, since they had not been visited by the Rajah.[1] Among the Toradjas of Central Celebes "the power of the rajah of Loowoo rested for the most part on superstition and on tradition. The ancestors had served the rajah in their day, and should the descendants fail to do so they would have to fear the wrath of the ancestors. Often Toradjas said to us, 'The rajah of Loowoo is our god.' They saw in him the complete embodiment of the old institutions. It used to be said that he had white blood, and the mysterious power that went forth from him was thought to be so great that a common Toradja could not see him without suffering from a swollen belly and dying."[2]

Superstitious veneration for the rajah of Loowoo.

Magical powers attributed to kings in Africa.

Similarly in Africa kings are commonly supposed to be endowed with a magical power of making the rain to fall and the crops to grow: drought and famine are set down to the weakness or ill-will of the king, and accordingly he is punished, deposed, or put to death.[3] To take two or three instances out of many, a writer of the eighteenth century speaks as follows of the kingdom of Loango in West Africa: "The government with these people is purely despotic. They say their lives and goods belong to the king; that he may dispose of and deprive them of them when he pleases, without form of process, and without their having anything to complain of. In his presence they pay marks of respect which resemble adoration. The individuals of the lower classes are persuaded that his power is not confined to the earth, and that he has credit enough to make rain fall from heaven: hence they fail not, when a continuance of drought makes them fearful about the harvest, to represent to him that if he does not take care to water the lands of his kingdom, they will die of hunger, and will find it impossible to make him the usual presents. The king, to satisfy the people, without however compromising himself with heaven,

The king of Loango.

[1] Hugh Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), pp. 259 *sq.*

[2] N. Adriani en Alb. C. Kruijt, *De Bare'e-sprekende Toradja's van Midden-Celebes*, i. (Batavia, 1912) pp. 130 *sq.*

[3] For evidence see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 342 *sqq.*, 392 *sqq.*

devolves the affair on one of his ministers, to whom he gives orders to cause to fall without delay upon the plains as much rain as is wanted to fertilize them. When the minister sees a cloud which he presumes must shed rain, he shews himself in public, as if to exercise the orders of his prince. The women and children troop around him, crying with all their might, *Give us rain, give us rain*: and he promises them some."[1] The king of Loango, says another old writer, "is honoured among them as though he were a God: and is called *Sambee* and *Pango*, which mean God. They believe he can let them have rain when he likes; and once a year, in December, which is the time they want rain, the people come to beg of him to grant it to them, on this occasion they make him presents, and none come empty-handed." On a day appointed, when the chiefs with their troops had assembled in warlike array, the drums used to beat and the horns to sound, and the king shot arrows into the air, which was believed to bring down the rain.[2] On the other side of Africa a similar state of things is reported by the old Portuguese historian Dos Santos. He says: "The king of all these lands of the interior and of the river of Sofala is a woolly-haired Kaffir, a heathen who adores nothing whatever, and has no knowledge of God; on the contrary, he esteems himself the god of all his lands, and is so looked upon and reverenced by his subjects." "When they suffer necessity or scarcity they have recourse to the king, firmly believing that he can give them all that they desire or have need of, and can obtain anything from his dead predecessors, with whom they believe that he holds converse. For this reason they ask the king to give them rain when it is required, and other favourable weather for their harvest, and in coming to ask for any of these things they bring him valuable presents, which the king accepts, bidding them return to their homes and he will be careful to grant their petitions. They are such barbarians that though they see how often the king

The king of Sofala.

[1] Proyart's "History of Loango, Kakongo, and other Kingdoms in Africa," in John Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels* (London, 1808–1814), xvi. 577. Compare O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686), pp. 335 *sq*.

[2] "The Strange Adventures of Andrew Battel," in J. Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 330.

does not give them what they ask for, they are not undeceived, but make him still greater offerings, and many days are spent in these comings and goings, until the weather turns to rain, and the Kaffirs are satisfied, believing that the king did not grant their request until he had been well bribed and importuned, as he himself affirms, in order to maintain them in their error."[1] Nevertheless "it was formerly the custom of the kings of this land to commit suicide by taking poison when any disaster or natural physical defect fell upon them, such as impotence, infectious disease, the loss of their front teeth by which they were disfigured, or any other deformity or affliction. To put an end to such defects they killed themselves, saying that the king should be free from any blemish." However, in the time of Dos Santos the king of Sofala, in defiance of all precedent, persisted in living and reigning after he had lost a front tooth; and he even went so far as to tax his royal predecessors with folly for having made away with themselves for such trifles as a decayed tooth or a little grey hair, declaring his firm resolution to live as long as he possibly could for the benefit of his loyal subjects.[2] At the present day the principal medicine-man of the Nandi, a tribe in British East Africa, is also supreme chief of the whole people. He is a diviner, and foretells the future: he makes women and cattle fruitful; and in time of drought he obtains rain either directly or through the intervention of the rainmakers. The Nandi believe implicitly in these marvellous powers of their chief. His person is usually regarded as absolutely sacred. Nobody may approach him with weapons in his hand or speak in his presence unless he is first addressed; and it is deemed most important that nobody should touch the chief's head, otherwise his powers of divination and so forth would depart from him.[3] This widespread African conception of the divinity of kings culminated long ago in ancient Egypt, where the kings were treated as gods both in life and in death, temples being dedicated to their worship

The chief medicine-man of the Nandi.

[1] J. Dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," chapters v. and ix., in G. McCall Theal's *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, vii. (1901) pp. 190 *sq.*, 199.

[2] J. Dos Santos, *op. cit.* pp. 194 *sq.*

[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi, their Language and Folk-lore* (Oxford, 1909), pp. 49 *sq.*

and priests appointed to conduct it.[1] And when the harvests failed, the ancient Egyptians, like the modern negroes, laid the blame of the failure on the reigning monarch.[2]

Superstitious veneration of the Peruvians for the Yncas.

A halo of superstitious veneration also surrounded the Yncas or governing class in ancient Peru. Thus the old historian Garcilasso de la Vega, himself the son of an Ynca princess, tells us that "it does not appear that any Ynca of the blood royal has ever been punished, at least publicly, and the Indians deny that such a thing has ever taken place. They say that the Ynca never committed any fault that required correction; because the teaching of their parents, and the common opinion that they were children of the Sun, born to teach and to do good to the rest of mankind, kept them under such control, that they were rather an example than a scandal to the commonwealth. The Indians also said that the Yncas were free from the temptations which usually lead to crime, such as passion for women, envy and covetousness, or the thirst for vengeance; because if they desired beautiful women, it was lawful for them to have as many as they liked; and any pretty girl they might take a fancy to, not only was never denied to them, but was given up by her father with expressions of extreme thankfulness that an Ynca should have condescended to take her as his servant. The same thing might be said of their property; for, as they never could feel the want of anything, they had no reason to covet the goods of others; while as governors they had command over all the property of the Sun and of the Ynca; and those who were in charge, were bound to give them all that they required, as children of the Sun, and brethren of the Ynca. They likewise had no temptation to kill or wound any one either for revenge, or in passion; for no one ever offended them. On the contrary, they received adoration only second to that offered to the royal person; and if any one, how high soever his rank, had enraged any Ynca, it would have been looked upon as sacrilege, and very severely punished. But it may be affirmed that an Indian

[1] C. P. Tiele, *History of the Egyptian Religion* (London, 1882), pp. 103 *sq.* For fuller details see A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique* (Paris, 1902); *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 418 *sq.*

[2] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxviii. 5. 14.

was never punished for offending against the person, honour, or property of any Ynca, because no such offence was ever committed, as they held the Yncas to be like gods."[1]

Superstitious veneration for kings in ancient India.

Nor have such superstitions been confined to savages and other peoples of alien race in remote parts of the world. They seem to have been shared by the ancestors of all the Aryan peoples from India to Ireland. Thus in the ancient Indian law-book called the Laws of Manu, we read: "Because a king has been formed of particles of those lords of the gods, he therefore surpasses all created beings in lustre; and, like the sun, he burns eyes and hearts; nor can anybody on earth even gaze on him. Through his (supernatural) power he is Fire and Wind, he Sun and Moon, he the Lord of justice (Yama), he Kubera, he Varuna, he great Indra. Even an infant king must not be despised (from an idea) that he is a (mere) mortal; for he is a great deity in human form."[2] And in the same law-book the effects of a good king's reign are thus described: "In that (country) where the king avoids taking the property of (mortal) sinners, men are born in (due) time (and are) long-lived. And the crops of the husbandmen spring up, each as it was sown, and the children die not, and no misshaped (offspring) is born."[3]

Superstitious veneration for kings in ancient Europe.

Similarly in Homeric Greece, kings and chiefs were described as sacred or divine; their houses, too, were divine, and their chariots sacred;[4] and it was thought that the reign of a good king caused the black earth to bring forth wheat and barley, the trees to be loaded with fruit, the flocks to multiply, and the sea to yield fish.[5] When the crops failed, the Burgundians used to blame their kings and depose them.[6] Similarly the Swedes always ascribed the abundance or scantiness of the harvest to the goodness or badness of their kings, and in time of dearth they have been known

[1] Garcilasso de la Vega, *First Part of the Royal Commentaries of the Yncas*, translated by C. R. Markham (London, 1869–1871), i. 154 *sq.*

[2] *The Laws of Manu*, vii. 5-8, translated by G. Bühler (Oxford, 1886), p. 217 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxv.).

[3] *The Laws of Manu*, ix. 246 *sq.*, translated by G. Bühler, p. 385.

[4] Homer, *Odyssey*, ii. 409, iv. 43, 691, vii. 167, viii. 2, xviii. 405; *Iliad*, ii. 335, xvii. 464, etc.

[5] Homer, *Odyssey*, xix. 109-114.

[6] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxviii. 5. 14.

to sacrifice them to the gods for the sake of procuring good crops.[1] In ancient Ireland it was also believed that when kings observed the customs of their ancestors the seasons were mild, the crops plentiful, the cattle fruitful, the waters abounded with fish, and the fruit-trees had to be propped up on account of the weight of their produce. A canon ascribed to St. Patrick enumerates among the blessings that attend the reign of a just king "fine weather, calm seas, crops abundant, and trees laden with fruit."[2] Superstitions of the kind which were thus current among the Celts of Ireland centuries ago appear to have survived among the Celts of Scotland down to Dr. Johnson's time; for when he travelled in Skye it was still held that the return of the chief of the Macleods to Dunvegan, after any considerable absence, produced a plentiful catch of herring;[3] and at a still later time, when the potato crop failed, the clan Macleod desired that a certain fairy banner in the possession of their chief might be unfurled,[4] apparently in the belief that the magical banner had only to be displayed to produce a fine crop of potatoes.

Survivals of the superstition in Scotland.

Perhaps the last relic of such superstitions which lingered about our English kings was the notion that they could heal scrofula by their touch. The disease was accordingly known as the King's Evil;[5] and on the analogy of the Polynesian superstitions which I have cited, we may perhaps conjecture that the skin disease of scrofula was originally supposed to be caused as well as cured by the king's touch. Certain it is that in Tonga some forms of scrofula, as well as indurations of the liver, to which the natives were very subject, were thought to be caused by touching a chief and

Touching for the King's Evil.

[1] Snorro Sturleson, *The Heimskringla, or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*, translated by S. Laing (London, 1844), saga i. chapters 18 and 47, vol. i. pp. 230, 256.

[2] P. W. Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland* (London, 1903), i. 56 *sq.*; J. O'Donovan, *The Book of Rights* (Dublin, 1847), p. 8, note.

[3] S. Johnson, *Journey to the Western Islands*, pp. 65 *sq.* (*The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, London, 1825, vol. vi.).

[4] J. G. Campbell, *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1900), p. 5.

[5] W. G. Black, *Folk-Medicine* (London, 1883), pp. 140 *sqq.* See further *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 368 *sqq.*; and especially Raymond Crawfurd, *The King's Evil* (Oxford, 1911), which contains a full history of the superstition from the eleventh century onwards, authenticated by documentary evidence.

to be healed, on homœopathic principles, in the very same fashion.[1] Similarly in Loango palsy is called the king's disease, because the negroes imagine it to be heaven's own punishment for treason meditated against the king.[2] The belief in the king's power to heal by touch is known to have been held both in France and England from the eleventh century onward. The first French king to touch the sick appears to have been Robert the Pious, the first English king Edward the Confessor.[3] In England the belief that the king could heal scrofula by his touch survived into the eighteenth century. Dr. Johnson was touched in his childhood for scrofula by Queen Anne.[4] It is curious that so typical a representative of robust common sense as Dr. Johnson should in his childhood and old age have thus been brought into contact with these ancient superstitions about royalty both in England and Scotland. In France the superstition lingered a good deal longer, for whereas Queen Anne was the last reigning monarch in England to touch for scrofula, both Louis XV. and Louis XVI. at their coronation touched thousands of patients, and as late as 1824 Charles X. at his coronation went through the same solemn farce. It is said that the sceptical wits of Louis XVI.'s time investigated all the cases of the persons on whom the king had laid hands at his coronation, with the result that out of two thousand four hundred who were touched only five were made whole.[5]

Conclusion.

The foregoing evidence, summary as it is, may suffice to prove that many peoples have regarded their rulers, whether chiefs or kings, with superstitious awe as beings of a higher order and endowed with mightier powers than common folk. Imbued with such a profound veneration for their governors and with such an exaggerated conception of their power, they cannot but have yielded them a prompter and more implicit obedience than if they had

[1] W. Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, Second Edition (London, 1818), i. 434, note.

[2] Proyart's "History of Loango, Kakongo, and other Kingdoms in Africa," in J. Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 573.

[3] Raymond Crawfurd, *The King's Evil*, pp. 11 *sqq.*, 18 *sqq.*

[4] J. Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson*, Ninth Edition (London, 1822), i. 18 *sq.*

[5] Raymond Crawfurd, *The King's Evil*, pp. 144 *sqq.*, 159 *sqq.*

known them to be men of common mould just like themselves. If that is so, I may claim to have proved my first proposition, which is, that among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for government, especially monarchical government, and has thereby contributed to the establishment and maintenance of civil order.

III

PRIVATE PROPERTY

Superstition as a prop of private property.

I PASS now to my second proposition, which is, that among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for private property, and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment.

Taboo in Polynesia.

Nowhere, perhaps, does this appear more plainly than in Polynesia, where the system of taboo reached its highest development; for the effect of tabooing a thing was, in the opinion of the natives, to endow it with a supernatural or magical energy which rendered it practically unapproachable by any but the owner. Thus taboo became a powerful instrument for strengthening the ties, perhaps our socialist friends would say riveting the chains, of private property. Indeed, some good authorities who were personally acquainted with the working of taboo in Polynesia, have held that the system was originally devised for no other purpose. For example, an Irishman who lived as a Maori with the Maoris for years, and knew them intimately, writes as follows: "The original object of the ordinary *tapu* seems to have been the preservation of property. Of this nature in a great degree was the ordinary personal *tapu*. This form of the *tapu* was permanent, and consisted in a certain sacred character which attached to the person of a chief and never left him. It was his birthright, a part in fact of himself, of which he could not be divested, and which was well understood and recognized at all times as a matter of course. The fighting men and petty chiefs, and every one indeed who could by any means claim the title of *rangatira*—which in the sense I now use it means gentleman—were all in

Taboo among the Maoris of New Zealand.

some degree more or less possessed of this mysterious quality. It extended or was communicated to all their moveable property, especially to their clothes, weapons, ornaments, and tools, and to everything in fact which they touched. This prevented their chattels from being stolen or mislaid, or spoiled by children, or used or handled in any way by others. And as in the old times, as I have before stated, every kind of property of this kind was precious in consequence of the great labour and time necessarily, for want of iron tools, expended in the manufacture, this form of the *tapu* was of great real service. An infringement of it subjected the offender to various dreadful imaginary punishments, of which deadly sickness was one." The culprit was also liable to what may be called a civil action, which consisted in being robbed and beaten; but the writer whom I have just quoted tells us that the worst part of the punishment for breaking taboo was the imaginary part, since even when the offence had been committed unwittingly the offender has been known to die of fright on learning what he had done.[1] Similarly, another writer, speaking of the Maoris, observes that "violators of the *tapu* were punished by the gods and also by men. The former sent sickness and death; the latter inflicted death, loss of property, and expulsion from society. It was a dread of the gods, more than of men, which upheld the *tapu*. Human eyes might be deceived, but the eyes of the gods could never be deceived."[2] "The chiefs, as might be expected, are fully aware of the advantages of the *tapu*, finding that it confers on them, to a certain extent, the power of making laws, and the superstition on which the *tapu* is founded will ensure the observance of them. Were they to transgress the *tapu*, they believe that the *attua* (God) would kill them, and so universal is this belief that it is, or rather was, a very rare occurrence to find any one daring enough to commit the

[1] *Old New Zealand*, by a Pakeha Maori (London, 1884), pp. 94-97, compare *id.* p. 83.

[2] A. S. Thomson, *The Story of New Zealand* (London, 1859), i. 103. Compare E. Dieffenbach, *Travels in New Zealand* (London, 1843), ii. 105: "The breaking of the *tapu*, if the crime does not become known, is, they believe, punished by the *atua*, who inflicts disease upon the criminal; if discovered, it is punished by him whom it regards, and often becomes the cause of war."

sacrilege. To have preserved this influence so completely among a people naturally so shrewd and intelligent, great care must, no doubt, have been taken not to apply it unless in the usual and recognised manner. To have done otherwise would have led to its being frequently transgressed; and consequently to the loss of its influence. Before the natives came into contact with the Europeans the *tapu* seems to have acted with the most complete success; as the belief was general, that any disregard of it would infallibly subject the offender to the anger of the *attua*, and death would be the consequence. Independently, however, of the support which the *tapu* derives from the superstitious fears of these people, it has, like most other laws, an appeal to physical force in case of necessity. A delinquent, if discovered, would be stripped of everything he possessed; and if a slave, would in all probability be put to death—many instances of which have actually occurred. So powerful is this superstitious feeling, that slaves will not venture to eat of the same food as their master; or even to cook at the same fire; believing that the *attua* would kill them if they did so. Everything about, or belonging to, a chief is accounted sacred by the slaves. Fond as they are of tobacco, it would be perfectly secure though left exposed on the roof of a chief's house; no one would venture to touch it. To try them, a friend of mine gave a fig of tobacco to a slave; who, after having used it, was informed that it had been on the roof of the chief's house. The poor fellow, in the greatest consternation, went immediately to the chief telling him what had happened, and beseeching him to take off the *tapu* from the tobacco to prevent the evil consequences."[1]

Taboo as a preserver of property.

Hence it has been truly said that "this form of *tapu* was a great preserver of property. The most valuable articles might, in ordinary circumstances, be left to its protection, in the absence of the owners, for any length of time."[2] If any one wished to preserve his crop, his house, his garments, or anything else, he had only to taboo the property, and it was safe. To shew that the thing was tabooed, he put a mark

[1] W. Brown, *New Zealand and its Aborigines* (London, 1845). pp. 12 *sq.*

[2] *Old New Zealand*, by a Pakeha Maori (London, 1884), p. 97.

to it. Thus, if he wished to use a particular tree in the forest to make a canoe, he tied a wisp of grass to the trunk; if he desired to appropriate a patch of bulrush in a swamp, he stuck up a pole in it with a bunch of grass at the top; if he left his house with all its valuables, to take care of itself, he secured the door with a bit of flax, and the place straightway became inviolable, nobody would meddle with it.[1]

Hence although the restrictions imposed by taboo were often vexatious and absurd, and the whole system has sometimes been denounced by Europeans as a degrading superstition, yet observers who looked a little deeper have rightly perceived that its enactments, enforced mainly by imaginary but still powerful sanctions, were often beneficial. "The New Zealanders," says one writer, "could not have been governed without some code of laws analogous to the *tapu*. Warriors submitted to the supposed decrees of the gods who would have spurned with contempt the orders of men, and it was better the people should be ruled by superstition than by brute force."[2] Again, an experienced missionary, who knew the Maoris well, writes that "the *tapu* in many instances was beneficial; considering the state of society, absence of law, and fierce character of the people, it formed no bad substitute for a dictatorial form of government, and made the nearest approach to an organized state of society."[3]

Taboo in the Marquesas Islands

In other parts of Polynesia the system of taboo with its attendant advantages and disadvantages, its uses and abuses, was practically the same, and everywhere, as in New Zealand, it tightened for good or evil the ties of private property. This indeed was perhaps the most obvious effect of the institution. In the Marquesas Islands, it is said, taboo was invested with a divine character as the expression of the will of the gods revealed to the priests; as such it set bounds to injurious excesses, prevented depredations, and united the people. Especially it converted the tabooed or privileged classes into landed proprietors; the land belonged to them alone and to their heirs; common

[1] Rev. R. Taylor, *Te Ika A Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, Second Edition (London, 1870), pp. 167, 171.

[2] A. S. Thomson, *The Story of New Zealand* (London, 1859), i. 105.

[3] Rev. R. Taylor, *op. cit.* pp. 172 *sq.*

folk lived by industry and by fishing. Taboo was the bulwark of the landowners; it was that alone which elevated them by a sort of divine right into a position of affluence and luxury above the vulgar; it was that alone which ensured their safety and protected them from the encroachments of their poor and envious neighbours. "Without doubt," say the writers from whom I borrow these observations, "the first mission of taboo was to establish property, the base of all society."[1]

Superstitious fear as a preserver of property in Samoa.

In Samoa also superstition played a great part in fostering a respect for private property. That it did so, we have the testimony of a missionary, Dr. George Turner, who lived for many years among the Samoans and has given us a very valuable account of their customs. He says: "I hasten to notice the second thing which I have already remarked was an auxiliary towards the maintenance of peace and order in Samoa, viz. *superstitious fear*. If the chief and heads of families, in their court of inquiry into any case of stealing, or other concealed matter, had a difficulty in finding out the culprit, they would make all involved swear that they were innocent. In swearing before the chiefs the suspected parties laid a handful of grass on the stone, or whatever it was, which was supposed to be the representative of the village god, and laying their hand on it, would say, 'In the presence of our chiefs now assembled, I lay my hand on the stone. If I stole the thing may I speedily die.' This was a common mode of swearing. The meaning of the grass was a silent additional imprecation that his family might all die, and that *grass* might grow over their habitation. If all swore, and the culprit was still undiscovered, the chiefs then wound up the affair by committing the case to the village god, and solemnly invoking him to mark out for speedy destruction the guilty

[1] Vincendon-Dumoulin et C. Desgraz, *Iles Marquises ou Nouk-hiva* (Paris, 1843), pp. 258-260. For details of the taboo system in the Marquesas Islands, see G. H. von Langsdorff, *Reise um die Welt* (Francfort, 1812), i. 114-119; Le P. Matthias G * * * *Lettres sur les Isles Marquises* (Paris, 1843), pp. 47 *sqq.* This last writer, who was a missionary to the Marquesas, observes that while taboo was both a political and a religious institution, he preferred to class it under the head of religion because it rested on the authority of the gods and formed the highest sanction of the whole religious system.

mischief-maker. But, instead of appealing to the chiefs, and calling for an oath, many were contented with their own individual schemes and imprecations to frighten thieves and prevent stealing. When a man went to his plantation and saw that some cocoa-nuts, or a bunch of bananas, had been stolen, he would stand and shout at the top of his voice two or three times, 'May fire blast the eyes of the person who has stolen my bananas! May fire burn down his eyes and the eyes of his god too!' This rang throughout the adjacent plantations, and made the thief tremble. They dreaded such uttered imprecations. . . . But there was another and more extensive class of curses, which were also feared, and formed a powerful check on stealing, especially from plantations and fruit trees, viz. the silent hieroglyphic taboo, or *tapui* (*tapooe*), as they call it. Of this there was a great variety."[1]

Among the Samoan taboos which were employed for the protection of property were the following:—1. *The sea-pike taboo.* To prevent his bread-fruits from being stolen a man would plait some coco-nut leaflets in the form of a sea-pike and hang one or more such effigies from the trees which he wished to protect. Any ordinary thief would be afraid to touch a tree thus guarded, for he believed that if he stole the fruit a sea-pike would mortally wound him the next time he went to sea. 2. *The white-shark taboo.* A man would plait a coco-nut leaf in the shape of a shark and hang it on a tree. This was equivalent to an imprecation that the thief might be devoured by a shark the next time he went to fish. 3. *The cross-stick taboo.* This was a stick hung horizontally on the tree. It expressed a wish that whoever stole fruit from the tree might be afflicted with a sore running right across his body till he died. 4. *The ulcer taboo.* This was made by burying some pieces of clam-shell in the ground and setting up at the spot several reeds tied together at the top in a bunch like the head of a man. By this the owner signified his wish that the thief might be laid low with ulcerous sores all over his body. If the thief happened thereafter to be troubled with swellings or sores, he confessed his fault and sent a present to the

Samoan taboos.

[1] G. Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), pp. 183-184.

owner of the land, who in return sent to the culprit a herb both as a medicine and as a pledge of forgiveness. 5. *The thunder taboo.* A man would plait coco-nut leaflets in the form of a small square mat and suspend it from a tree, adding some white streamers of native cloth. A thief believed that for trespassing on such a tree he or his children might be struck by lightning, or perhaps that lightning might strike and blast his own trees. "From these few illustrations," says Dr. Turner in conclusion, "it will be observed that Samoa formed no exception to the remarkably widespread system of superstitious taboo; and the extent to which it preserved honesty and order among a heathen people will be readily imagined."[1]

Taboo in Tonga.

In Tonga a man guilty of theft or of any other crime was said to have broken the taboo, and as such persons were supposed to be particularly liable to be bitten by sharks, all on whom suspicion fell were compelled to go into water frequented by sharks; if they were bitten or devoured, they were guilty; if they escaped, they were innocent.[2]

Taboo in Melanesia.

In Melanesia also a system of taboo (*tambu*, *tapu*) exists; it is described as "a prohibition with a curse expressed or implied," and derives its sanction from a belief that the chief or other person who imposes a taboo has the support of a powerful ghost or spirit (*tindalo*). If a common man took it upon himself to taboo anything, people would watch to see whether a transgressor of the taboo fell sick; if he did, it was a proof that the man who imposed the taboo was backed by a powerful ghost, and his reputation would rise accordingly. Each ghost affected a particular sort of leaf, which was his taboo mark.[3] In New Britain plantations, coco-nut trees, and other possessions are protected against thieves by marks of taboo attached to them, and it is thought that whoever violates the taboo will be visited by sickness or other misfortune. The nature of the sickness or misfortune varies with that of the mark or magical object which embodies the mystic virtue of the taboo. One plant used for this purpose will cause the

1 G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 185-188.

2 W. Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, Second Edition (London, 1818), ii. 221.

3 R. H. Codrington, D.D., *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), pp. 215 *sq.*

thief's head to ache; another will make his thighs swell; another will break his legs; and so forth. Even the murmuring of a spell over a fence is believed to ensure that whoever steals sticks from the fence will have a swollen head.[1] In Fiji the institution of taboo was the secret of power and the strength of despotic rule. It was wondrously diffused, affecting things great and small. Here it might be seen tending a brood of chickens and there directing the energies of a kingdom. The custom was much in favour with the chiefs, who adjusted it so that it sat lightly on them and heavily on others. By it they gained influence, supplied their wants, and commanded at will their inferiors. In imposing a taboo a chief need only be checked by a regard for ancient precedent. Inferior persons endeavoured by the help of the system to put their yam-beds and plantain-plots within a sacred pale.[2]

Taboo in the Malay Archipelago.

A system of taboo based on superstition prevails all over the islands of the Malay Archipelago, where the common term for taboo is *pamali*, *pomali*, or *pemali*, though in some places other words, such as *poso*, *potu*, or *boboso* are in use to express the same idea.[3] In this great region also the superstition associated with taboo is a powerful instrument to enforce the rights of private property. Thus, in the island of Timor "a prevalent custom is the *pomali*, exactly equivalent to the 'taboo' of the Pacific islanders, and equally respected. It is used on the commonest occasions, and a few palm leaves stuck outside a garden as a sign of the *pomali* will preserve its produce from thieves as effectually as the threatening notice of man-traps, spring guns, or a savage dog, would do with us."[4] In Amboyna the word for taboo is *pamali*. A man who wishes to protect his fruit-trees or other possessions against theft may do it in various ways. For example, he may make a white cross on a pot

[1] R. Parkinson, *Im Bismarck-Archipel* (Leipsic, 1887), p. 144; *id.*, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee* (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 193 *sq.*

[2] Thomas Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, Second Edition (London, 1860), i. 234.

[3] G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië* (Leyden, 1893), pp. 596-603; G. W. W. C. Baron van Hoëvell, *Ambon en meer bepaaldelijk de Oeliasers* (Dordrecht, 1875), pp. 148-152.

[4] A. R. Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, Sixth Edition (London, 1877), p. 196.

and hang the pot on the fruit-tree; then the thief who steals fruit from that tree will be a leper. Or he may place the effigy of a mouse under the tree; then the thief will have marks on his nose and ears as if a mouse had gnawed them. Or he may plait dry sago leaves into two round discs and tie them to the tree; then the thief's body will swell up and burst.[1] In Ceram the methods of protecting property from thieves are similar. For example, a man places a pig's jaw in the branches of his fruit-tree; after that any person who dares to steal the fruit from the tree will be rent in pieces by a wild boar. The image of a crocodile with a thread of red cotton tied round its neck will be equally efficacious; the thief will be devoured by a crocodile. A wooden effigy of a snake will make the culprit to be stung by a serpent. A figure of a cat with a red band round its neck will cause all who approach the tree with evil intentions to suffer from excruciating pains in their stomachs, as if a cat were clawing their insides.[2] An image of a swallow will cause the thief to suffer as if a swallow were pecking his eyes out: a piece of thorny wood and a red spongy stone will inflict piercing pangs on him and make his whole body to be red and pitted with minute holes: a burnt-out brand will cause his house to burst into flames, without any apparent reason; and so on.[3] Similarly in the Ceram Laut Islands a man protects his coco-nut trees or sago palms by placing charmed objects at the foot of them. For example, he puts the effigy of a fish under his coco-nut tree and says, "Grandfather fish, cause the person who steals my coco-nuts to be sick and vomit." The culprit accordingly is seized with pains in his stomach and can only be relieved of them by the owner of the coco-nuts, who spits betel-nut juice on the ailing part and blows into the sufferer's ear, saying, "Grandfather fish, return to the sea. You have there room enough and great rocks of coral where you can

[1] J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), pp. 61 *sq.*

[2] J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* pp. 114 *sq.*

[3] Van Schmidt, "Aanteekeningen nopens de zeden, gewoonten en gebruiken, benevens de vooroordeelen en bijgeloovigheden der bevolking van de eilanden Saparoea, Haroekoe, Noessa Laut, en van een gedeelte van de zuidkust van Ceram, in vroegeren en lateren tijd," *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlands Indie*, v. Tweede deel (Batavia, 1843), pp. 499-502.

swim about." Or again he may make a miniature coffin and place it on the ground under the tree; then the thief will suffer from shortness of breath and a feeling of suffocation, as if he were actually shut up in a coffin. And many other devices there are whereby in these islands the owner of fruit-trees protects the fruit from the depredations of his unscrupulous neighbours. In every case he deposits at the foot of the tree or fastens to the trunk a charmed object, which he regards as endowed with supernatural powers, and he invokes its aid to guard his possessions.[1]

Charms for the protection of fruit-trees in Central Celebes.

The Bare'e-speaking Toradjas of Central Celebes protect their fruit-trees, especially their sirih plants and their coco-nut palms against thieves by amulets or charms of various sorts which they attach to the trees. The charms consist of the leaves of certain plants or parts of an animal tied up in leaves. Before the owner fastens one of these amulets to the tree, he says, "O charm (*ooroo*), if any man will take of these fruits, make him sick." And the people in general believe that sickness will overtake the thief who disregards the taboo and steals the fruit. The kind of sickness or other mishap which will visit the sinner varies with the nature of the charm. The qualities of the object which is fastened to the tree are supposed to enter into the culprit's body and to affect him accordingly. For example, if the charm consists of a particular sharp-edged grass, then the thief will feel sharp pains in his body; if it is part of a white ant heap, he will be afflicted with leprosy; if it is a certain weed of which the fruit drops off easily, his teeth will fall out; if it is a plant whose leaves cause itching, his body will itch all over; if it is the *dracaena terminalis*, he will be killed in war; and so on. There is a great variety of these amulets for the protection of fruit-trees; every man has his own in which he puts his trust. Yet while the Toradjas believe that sickness or other misfortune follows automatically the breach of such taboos, nevertheless they allege that they know how to evade the force and vigilance of the charm and to eat of the forbidden fruit with impunity. One of the expedients adopted for that purpose is as follows. You take a handful of earth and throw it at the tree; then with

[1] J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.* pp. 167 *sq.*

your chopping-knife you chip a splinter from the trunk, and addressing the protective charm you say, "Make the earth sick first, and then the chopping-knife, and then me." After that you have practically nothing to fear from the amulet, and you can steal the fruit and eat it at your ease. But that is not all. Some artful thieves are able not merely to counteract the charm and render it powerless against themselves; they can even reverse its action and direct it against the owner of the tree himself. Indeed, so well-recognized is this power that many a prudent Toradja refuses to protect his trees with amulets at all, lest in doing so he should be simply putting in the hands of his enemies a weapon to be used by them for his own destruction. One of the ways in which a cunning robber will thus defeat the ends of justice is this. He goes boldly up to the fruit-tree which he intends to rob, removes the charm from it, and hangs it up somewhere else. Then he lays a plank on the ground with one end of it touching the trunk of the fruit-tree; on this plank he walks up to the tree and calmly appropriates the fruit. The charm, of course, in the meantime is helpless, since it is not on the tree. When he has stripped the fruit, the rascal restores the charm to its proper place and removes the plank. Again, the guardian charm is helpless; it cannot pursue the thief, since he has carried away the plank, leaving no possible exit from the tree. Thus the faithful guardian is, as it were, imprisoned in the castle which he has been set to guard; he frets and fumes at his confinement, and in his blind rage will fall foul of the owner of the tree himself when next he comes to inspect his property. This is, perhaps, the simplest and easiest mode of hoisting a fruit-farmer with his petard. There are, however, other ways of doing it. One of them is to get up into the tree and hang by your feet from a branch with your head down, and, while thus suspended in the air, to chew the root of a stinging nettle. This causes the owner of the tree either to be eaten up by a crocodile or to perish in war. A very popular charm among the Mountain Toradjas of Central Celebes is to take the head or paw of an iguana and hang it on the fruit-tree which is to be protected. The head bites the thief's head, and the paw grabs him by the

leg, so that he feels excruciating pains in these portions of his frame. But if you hang up the whole carcase, the thief is a dead man.[1]

Taboo (*fady*) in Madagascar.

In Madagascar there is an elaborate system of taboo known as *fady*.[2] It has been carefully studied in a learned monograph by Professor A. van Gennep,[3] who argues that originally all property was based on religion, and that marks of property were marks of taboo.[4] However, so far as the evidence permits us to judge, it does not appear that the system has been used by the Malagasy for the protection of property to the same extent as by the Polynesians, the Melanesians, and the Indonesians. But we hear of Malagasy charms placed in the fields to afflict with leprosy and other maladies any persons who should dare to steal from them.[5] And we are told that some examples of *fady* or taboo "seem to imply a curious basis for the moral code in regard to the rights of property among the last generation of Malagasy. It does not appear to have been *fady* to steal in general, but certain articles were specified, to steal which there were various penalties attached. Thus, to steal an egg caused the thief to become leprous; to steal *landy* (native silk) caused blindness or some other infirmity. And to steal iron was also visited by some bodily affliction."[6] In order to recover stolen property the Malagasy had recourse to a deity called Ramanandroany. The owner would take a remnant of the thing that had been purloined, and going with it to the idol would say, "As to whoever stole our property, O Ramanandroany, kill him by day, destroy him by night, and strangle him; let there be none amongst men like him; let him not be able to increase in riches, not even a farthing, but let him pick up his livelihood as a hen pecks rice-grains; let his eyes be blinded, and his knees swollen,

[1] N. Adriani en Alb. C. Kruijt, *De Barè'e-sprekende Toradja's van Midden-Celebes*, i. (Batavia, 1912) pp. 399-401.

[2] H. F. Standing, "Malagasy *fady*," *The Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine*, vol. ii. (Antananarivo, 1896) pp. 252-265 (*Reprint of the second Four Numbers*).

[3] A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904).

[4] A. van Gennep, *op. cit.* pp. 183 *sqq.*

[5] A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar*, p. 184. The writer has devoted a chapter (xi. pp. 183-193) to taboos of property.

[6] H. F. Standing, "Malagasy *fady*," *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine*, vol. ii. (Antananarivo, 1896) p. 256.

O Ramanandroany." It was supposed that these curses fell on the thief.[1]

Property protected by superstitious fears elsewhere.

Similar modes of enforcing the rights of private property by the aid of superstitious fears have been adopted in many other parts of the world. The subject has been copiously illustrated by Dr. Edward Westermarck in his very learned work on the origin and development of the moral ideas.[2] Here I will cite only a few cases out of many. The Kouis of Laos, on the borders of Siam, protect their plantations against thieves in a very simple way. They place a "shaking tubercule" (*prateal anchot*) on the land which is to be guarded; and if any thief should thereafter dare to lay hands on the crop, he is immediately seized by a shaking fit like that of a drenched dog and cannot budge from the spot. They say that a fisherman at Sangkeah employed this charm with the best results. He used always to find his bow-net empty till one day he had the happy thought of protecting it by a "shaking tubercule." It acted like magic. The thief went down as usual into the river and brought up the net full of fish. But hardly had he stepped on the bank when he began to shiver and shake, with the dripping net and its writhing silvery contents glued to his breast. Two days afterwards, the proprietor, making his rounds, discovered the thief on the same spot, shivering and chattering away as hard as

[1] W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London, preface dated 1838), i. 414.

[2] E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, ii. (London, 1908) pp. 59 69. In an article on taboo published many years ago (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, xxiii. (1888) pp. 15 *sqq.*) I briefly pointed out the part which the system of taboo has played in the evolution of law and morality. I may be allowed to quote a passage from the article: "The original character of the taboo must be looked for not in its civil but in its religious element. It was not the creation of a legislator, but the gradual outgrowth of animistic beliefs, to which the ambition and avarice of chiefs and priests afterwards gave an artificial extension. But in serving the cause of avarice and ambition it subserved the progress of civilization, by fostering conceptions of the rights of property and the sanctity of the marriage tie,—conceptions which in time grew strong enough to stand by themselves and to fling away the crutch of superstition which in earlier days had been their sole support. For we shall scarcely err in believing that even in advanced societies the moral sentiments, in so far as they are merely sentiments and are not based on an induction from experience, derive much of their force from an original system of taboo. Thus on the taboo were grafted the golden fruits of law and morality, while the parent stem dwindled slowly into the sour crabs and empty husks of popular superstition on which the swine of modern society are still content to feed."

ever, but of course the fish in the net were dead and rotten.[1] Among the Kawars, a primitive hill tribe of the Central Provinces in India, "the sword, the gun, the axe, the spear have each a special deity, and in fact in the Bangawan, the tract where the wilder Kawars dwell, it is believed that every article of household furniture is the residence of a spirit, and that if any one steals or injures it without the owner's leave the spirit will bring some misfortune on him in revenge. Theft is said to be unknown among them, partly on this account and partly perhaps because no one has much property worth stealing."[2] In Ceylon, when a person wishes to protect his fruit-trees from thieves, he hangs up certain grotesque figures round the orchard and dedicates it to the devils. After that no native will dare to touch the fruit; even the owner himself will not venture to use it till the charm has been removed by a priest, who naturally receives some of the fruit for his trouble.[3] The Indians of Cumana in South America surrounded their plantations with a single cotton thread, and this was safeguard enough; for it was believed that any trespasser would soon die. The Juris of Brazil adopt the same simple means of stopping gaps in their fences.[4]

Property in Annam protected by ghosts and curses.

The Annamites in the interior of Tonquin believe that the ghosts of young girls who have been buried in a corner of the dwelling act as a vigilant police; if thieves have made their way into the house and are preparing to depart with their booty, they hear the voice of a ghost enumerating the things on which they have laid hands, and in a panic they drop them and take to flight.[5] But if in spite of all an Annamite should chance to be robbed, he can easily recover the stolen property as follows. With a clod of earth taken from the kitchen floor, a pinch of vermilion, the white of an egg, and a little alcohol he makes a ball, which stands for the head of the thief. This he puts in the fire on

[1] É. Aymonier, *Notes sur le Laos* (Saigon, 1885), p. 233.

[2] *Central Provinces, Ethnographic Survey*, vii., *Draft Articles on Forest Tribes*, Third Series (Allahabad, 1911), p. 45.

[3] R. Percival, *Account of the Island of Ceylon* (London, 1803), p. 198.

[4] C. F. Ph. v. Martius, *Zur Ethnographie Amerikas, zumal Brasiliens* (Leipsic, 1867), p. 86.

[5] P. Giran, *Magie et Religion Annamites* (Paris, 1912), p. 186.

the hearth, and having lit some incense sticks he pronounces the following incantation: "On such a day of such a month of such a year So-and-so was robbed of various things. The name of the thief is unknown. I pray the guardian-spirit of the kitchen to hold the rascal's head in the fire that it may burn." After that, if the thief does not restore the stolen property, he will be a dead man within a month.[1]

Thieves cursed in Nias.

Similarly in Nias, an island to the west of Sumatra, when a thief cannot be found he is cursed, and to give weight to the curse a dog is burned alive. While the animal is expiring in torments, the man who has been robbed expresses his wish that the thief may likewise die in agony; and they say that thieves who have been often cursed do die screaming.[2] Curses are also employed for the same purpose with excellent effect by the Sea Dyaks of Borneo. On this point a missionary bears the following testimony. "With an experience of nearly twenty years in Borneo, during which I came into contact with thousands of the people, I have known of only two instances of theft among the Dyaks. One was a theft of rice. The woman who lost the rice most solemnly and publicly cursed the thief, whoever it might be. The next night the rice was secretly left at her door. The other was a theft of money. In this case, too, the thief was cursed. The greater part of the money was afterwards found returned to the box from which it had been abstracted. Both these incidents show the great dread the Dyak has of a curse. Even an undeserved curse is considered a terrible thing, and, according to Dyak law, to curse a person for no reason at all is a fineable offence.

Thieves cursed among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo.

"A Dyak curse is a terrible thing to listen to. I have only once heard a Dyak curse, and I am sure I do not want to do so again. I was travelling in the Saribas district, and at that time many of the Dyaks there had gone in for coffee-planting; indeed, several of them had started coffee plantations on a small scale. A woman told me that some one had over and over again stolen the ripe coffee-berries from her plantation. Not only were the ripe berries stolen, but the thief had carelessly picked many of the young berries and

[1] P. Giran, *op. cit.*, pp. 190 *sq.*

[2] H. Sundermann, *Die Insel Nias und die Mission daselbst* (Barmen, 1905), p. 34.

thrown them on the ground, and many of the branches of the plants had been broken off. In the evening, when I was seated in the public part of the house with many Dyak men and women round me, we happened to talk about coffee-planting. The woman was present, and told us of her experiences, and how her coffee had been stolen by some thief, who, she thought, must be one of the inmates of the house. Then she solemnly cursed the thief. She began in a calm voice, but worked herself up into a frenzy. We all listened horror-struck, and no one interrupted her. She began by saying what had happened, and how these thefts had gone on for some time. She had said nothing before, hoping that the thief would mend his ways; but the matter had gone on long enough, and she was going to curse the thief, as nothing, she felt sure, would make him give up his evil ways. She called on all the spirits of the waters and the hills and the air to listen to her words and to aid her. She began quietly, but became more excited as she went on. She said something of this kind:

"'If the thief be a man, may he be unfortunate in all he undertakes! May he suffer from a disease that does not kill him, but makes him helpless—always in pain—and a burden to others. May his wife be unfaithful to him, and his children become as lazy and dishonest as he is himself. If he go out on the war-path, may he be killed, and his head smoked over the enemy's fire. If he be boating, may his boat be swamped and may he be drowned. If he be out fishing, may an alligator kill him suddenly, and may his relatives never find his body. If he be cutting down a tree in the jungle, may the tree fall on him and crush him to death. May the gods curse his farm so that he may have no crops, and have nothing to eat, and when he begs for food, may he be refused, and die of starvation.

Curses on a man thief.

"'If the thief be a woman, may she be childless, or if she happen to be with child let her be disappointed, and let her child be still-born, or, better still, let her die in childbirth. May her husband be untrue to her, and despise her and ill-treat her. May her children all desert her if she live to grow old. May she suffer from such diseases as are peculiar to women, and may her eyesight grow dim as the years go

Curses on a woman thief.

on, and may there be no one to help her or lead her about when she is blind.'

"I have only given the substance of what she said; but I shall never forget the silence and the awed faces of those who heard her. I left the house early next morning, so I do not know what was the result of her curse—whether the thief confessed or not." [1]

Thieves cursed in ancient Greece.

The ancient Greeks seem to have made a very liberal use of curses as a cheap and effective mode of protecting property, which dispenses the injured party from resorting to the tedious, expensive, and too often fruitless formalities of the law. These curses they inscribed on tablets of lead and other materials and deposited either in the place which was to be protected from depredation or in the temple of the god to whose tender mercies the criminal was committed. For example, in a sacred precinct dedicated to Demeter, Persephone, Pluto and other deities of a stern and inflexible temper at Cnidus, a number of leaden tablets were found inscribed with curses which consigned the malefactors of various sorts to the vengeance of the two Infernal Goddesses, Demeter and her daughter. "May he or she never find Persephone propitious!" is the constantly repeated burden of these prayers; and in some of them the sinner is not only excommunicated in this world but condemned to eternal torments in the world hereafter. Often the persons who launched these curses were ladies. One irate dame consigns to perdition the thief who had stolen her bracelet or the defaulter who had failed to send back her underclothes.[2] Another curse, engraved on a marble slab found at Smyrna, purports that if any man should steal one of the sacred vessels of a certain goddess or injure her sacred fish, he may die a painful death, devoured by the fishes.[3] Sometimes, apparently, these Greek impre-

[1] Edwin H. Gomes, *Seventeen Years among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo* (London, 1911), pp. 64-66.

[2] (Sir) Charles Thomas Newton, *Essays on Art and Archaeology* (London, 1880), pp. 193 *sq.*

[3] G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[2] (Leipsic, 1898–1901), vol. ii. pp. 284 *sq.*, No. 584; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Brussels, 1900), p. 624, No. 728. The goddess was probably the Syrian Atargatis or Derceto, to whom fish were sacred (Xenophon, *Anabasis*, i. 4. 9). For more examples of these ancient Greek curses, see Ch. Michel, *op. cit.*, pp. 877-880, Nos. 1318-1329. Compare W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings* (Cambridge, 1902), pp. 337 *sqq.*

cations were as effective in reclaiming sinners as Dyak curses are to this day. Thus we read of a curious dedication to a lunar deity of Asia Minor, by name Men Aziottenos, which declares how one Artemidorus, having been reviled by a couple of rude fellows, cursed them in a votive tablet, and how one of the culprits, having been punished by the god, made a propitiatory offering and mended his wicked ways.[1] To prevent people from encroaching on their neighbours' land by removing the boundary stones, the Greeks committed landmarks to the special protection of the great god Zeus;[2] and Plato dwells with unction on the double punishment, divine and human, to which the sinner exposed himself who dared to tamper with these sacred stones.[3] The Romans went even further, for they created a god for the sole purpose of looking after landmarks, and he must have had his hands very full if he executed all the curses which were levelled not only at every man who shifted his neighbour's boundary stone, but even at the oxen which he employed to plough up his neighbour's land.[4] The Hebrew code of Deuteronomy pronounced a solemn curse on such as removed their neighbour's landmarks;[5] and Babylonian kings exhausted their imagination in pouring out a flood of imprecations against the abandoned wretch who thus set at naught the rights of property in land.[6] King Nebuchadnezzar in particular, before he was turned out to grass, appears to have distinguished himself by the richness and variety of his execrations, if we may judge by a specimen of them which has survived. A brief extract from this masterpiece may serve to illustrate the king's style of minatory eloquence. Referring to the bold bad man, "be it shepherd or governor, or agent or regent, levy master or magistrate," whosoever he might be, who "for all days to

Landmarks protected by gods and curses.

[1] (Sir) C. T. Newton, *Essays on Art and Archaeology*, p. 195.

[2] Demosthenes, *De Halonneso*, 40.

[3] Plato, *Laws*, viii. 9, pp. 842 *sq.*

[4] Festus, *s.v.* "Termino," p. 368, ed. C. O. Müller (Leipsic, 1839); Varro, *De lingua latina*, v. 74; Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquitates Romanae*, ii. 74. As to Terminus, the Roman god of boundaries, and his annual festival the *Terminalia*, see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*[3] (Berlin, 1881–1883), i. 254 *sqq.*; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*[2] (Munich, 1912), pp. 136 *sq.*

[5] Deuteronomy, xxviii. 17.

[6] C. H. W. Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts and Letters* (Edinburgh, 1904), p. 191.

come, for the future of human habitations," should dare to tamper with the land which his Majesty had just marked out, "Ninib, lord of boundaries and boundary-stones, tear out his boundary stone. Gula, great lady, put lingering illness into his body, that dark and light red blood he may pour out like water. Ishtar, lady of countries, whose fury is a flood, reveal difficulties to him, that he escape not from misfortune. Nusku, mighty lord, powerful burner, the god, my creator, be his evil demon and may he burn his root. Whoever removes this stone, in the dust hides it, burns it with fire, casts it into water, shuts it up in an enclosure, causes a fool, a deaf man, an idiot to take it, places it in an invisible place, may the great gods, who upon this stone are mentioned by their names, curse him with an evil curse, tear out his foundation and destroy his seed."[1]

Superstition as an ally of the rights of private property in Africa.

In Africa also superstition is a powerful ally of the rights of private property. Thus the Balonda place beehives on high trees in the forest and protect them against thieves by tying a charm or "piece of medicine" round the tree-trunks. This proves a sufficient protection. "The natives," says Livingstone, "seldom rob each other, for all believe that certain medicines can inflict disease and death; and though they consider that these are only known to a few, they act on the principle that it is best to let them all alone. The gloom of these forests strengthens the superstitious feelings of the people. In other quarters, where they are not subjected to this influence, I have heard the chiefs issue proclamations to the effect, that real witchcraft medicines had been placed at certain gardens from which produce had been stolen; the thieves having risked the power of the ordinary charms previously placed there."[2]

The Wanika of East Africa.

The Wanika of East Africa "believe in the power and efficacy of charms and amulets, and they wear them in great variety; legs, arms, neck, waist, hair, and every part of the body are laden with them, either for the cure or prevention of disease; for the expulsion or repulsion of evil spirits; and to keep at bay snakes, wild animals, and every other evil.

[1] R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (Oxford, preface dated 1911), pp. 390-392.

[2] David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London, 1857), p. 285.

They hang painted calabashes from the baobab at their hut doors to keep away thieves; shells, dolls, eggs scratched over with Arabic characters by the *Wana Chuoni* (sons of the book) of the coast, are placed about their plantations and in their fruit-trees, and they believe that death would overtake a thief who should disregard them. A charm bound to the leg of a fowl is ample protection for the village. There is no doubt that, superstitious as the people are, they dread running great risks for the sake of small gains, and so these charms answer their purpose."[1] Among the Boloki of the Upper Congo, when a woman finds that the cassava roots, which she keeps soaking in a water-hole, are being stolen, she takes a piece of gum copal, and fixing it in the cleft of a split stick she puts it on the side of the hole, while at the same time she calls down a curse on the thief. If the thief is a man, he will henceforth have no luck in fishing; if she is a woman, she will have no more success in farming.[2] The Ekoi of Southern Nigeria protect their farms against thieves by bundles of palm leaves to which they give the name of *okpata*. Should any one steal from a farm thus protected, he will fall sick and will not recover unless he gives a certain dance, to which the name of *okpata* is also applied.[3]

The Boloki of the Congo.

In the mountains of Marrah, a district of Darfur, houses, goods, and cattle are protected against thieves by certain fierce and dangerous guardian-spirits called *damzogs*, which can be bought like watch dogs. Under the guardianship of such a spiritual protector the sheep and cows are left free to wander at will; for if any one were rash enough to attempt to steal or kill one of the beasts, his hand with the knife in it would remain sticking fast to the animal's throat till the owner came and caught the rascal. An Arab merchant, travelling in Darfur, received from a friend the following account of the way to procure one of these useful guardians. "At the time when I first began to trade, my friend, I often heard that *damzogs* could be bought and sold, and that to procure one I must apply to the owner of a *damzog*, and

Guardian spirits (*damzogs*) of property in Darfur.

[1] Charles New, *Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa* (London, 1873), p. 106.

[2] John H. Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals* (London, 1913), pp. 310 *sq*.

[3] P. Amaury Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Bush* (London, 1912), p. 296.

discuss the price with him. When the bargain is concluded, it is necessary to give a large gourd of milk to the seller, who takes it to his house, where are his *damzogs*. On entering he salutes them, and goes and hangs up his vase to a hook, saying,—' One of my friends—such a one—very rich, is in fear of robbers, and asks me to supply him with a guardian. Will one of you go and live in his house? There is plenty of milk there, for it is a house of blessing, and the proof thereof is, that I bring you this *kara* of milk.' The *damzogs* at first refuse to comply with the invitation. ' No, no,' say they, ' not one of us will go.' The master of the hut conjures them to comply with his desires, saying, ' Oh! let the one that is willing descend into the *kara*.' He then retires a little, and presently one of the *damzogs* is heard to flop into the milk, upon which he hastens and claps upon the vase a cover made of date-leaves. Thus stopped up he unhooks the *kara*, and hands it over to the buyer, who takes it away and hangs it on the wall of his hut, and confides it to the care of a slave or of a wife, who every morning comes and takes it, emptying out the milk, washing it and replenishing it, and hanging it up again. From that time forward the house is safe from theft or loss." The merchant's informant, the Shereef Ahmed Bedawee, had himself purchased one of these guardian spirits, who proved most vigilant and efficient in the discharge of his duties; indeed his zeal was excessive, for he not only killed several slaves who tried to rob his master, but did summary execution on the Shereef's own son, when the undutiful young man essayed to pilfer from his father's shop. This was too much for the Shereef; he invited a party of friends to assist him in expelling the inflexible guardian. They came armed with guns and a supply of ammunition, and by raking the shop with repeated volleys of musketry they at last succeeded in putting the spirit to flight.[1]

The curses of smiths and potters.

Amongst the Nandi of British East Africa nobody dares to steal anything from a smith; for if he did, the smith would heat his furnace, and as he blew the bellows to make

[1] *Travels of an Arab Merchant* [*Mohammed Ibn-Omar El Tounsy*] *in Soudan*, abridged from the French by Bayle St. John (London, 1854), pp. 69-73.

the flames roar he would curse the thief so that he would die. And in like manner among these people, with whom the potters are women, nobody dares to filch anything from a potter; for next time she heated her wares the potter would curse him, saying, "Burst like a pot, and may thy house become red," and the thief so cursed would die.[1] In Loango, when a man is about to absent himself from home for a considerable time he protects his hut by placing a charm or fetish before it, consisting perhaps of a branch with some bits of broken pots or trash of that sort; and we are told that even the most determined robber would not dare to cross a threshold defended by these mysterious signs.[2] On the coast of Guinea fetishes are sometimes inaugurated for the purpose of detecting and punishing certain kinds of theft; and not only the culprit himself, but any person who knows of his crime and fails to give information is liable to be punished by the fetish. When such a fetish is instituted, the whole community is warned of it, so that he who transgresses thereafter does so at his peril. For example, a fetish was set up to prevent sheep-stealing and the people received warning in the usual way. Shortly afterwards a slave, who had not heard of the law, stole a sheep and offered to divide it with a friend. The friend had often before shared with him in similar enterprises, but the fear of the fetish was now too strong for him; he informed on the thief, who was brought to justice and died soon after of a lingering and painful disease. Nobody in the country ever doubted but that the fetish had killed him.[3] Among the Ewe-speaking tribes of the Slave Coast in West Africa houses and household property are guarded by amulets (*vŏ-sesao*), which derive their virtue from being consecrated or belonging to the gods. The crops, also, in solitary glades of the forest are left under the protection of such amulets, generally fastened to long sticks in some conspicuous position; and so guarded they are quite safe from pillage. By the side of the paths, too, may be seen food and palm-

Charms to protect property in West Africa.

[1] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi, their Language and Folk-lore* (Oxford, 1909), pp. 36, 37.

[2] Proyart's "History of Loango, Kakongo, and other Kingdoms in Africa," in J. Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels* (London, 1808-1814), xvi. 595.

[3] Rev. J. Leighton Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), pp. 275 *sq.*

wine lying exposed for sale with nothing but a charm to protect them; a few cowries placed on each article indicate its price. Yet no native would dare to take the food or the wine without depositing its price; for he dreads the unknown evil which the god who owns the charm would bring upon him for thieving.[1] In Sierra Leone charms, called *greegrees*, are often placed in plantations to deter people from stealing, and it is said that "a few old rags placed upon an orange tree will generally, though not always, secure the fruit as effectually as if guarded by the dragons of the Hesperides. When any person falls sick, if, at the distance of several months, he recollects having stolen fruit, etc., or having taken it *softly* as they term it, he immediately supposes *wangka* has caught him, and to get cured he must go or send to the person whose property he had taken, and make to him whatever recompense he demands."[2]

Charms to protect property in the West Indies.

Superstitions of the same sort have been transported by the negroes to the West Indies, where the name for magic is *obi* and the magician is called the *obeah* man. There also, we are told, the stoutest-hearted negroes "tremble at the very sight of the ragged bundle, the bottle or the egg-shells, which are stuck in the thatch or hung over the door of a hut, or upon the branch of a plantain tree, to deter marauders. . . . When a negro is robbed of a fowl or a hog, he applies directly to the *Obeah*-man or woman; it is then made known among his fellow blacks, that *obi* is set for the thief; and as soon as the latter hears the dreadful news, his terrified imagination begins to work, no resource is left but in the superior skill of some more eminent *Obeah*-man of the neighbourhood, who may counteract the magical operations of the other; but if no one can be found of higher rank and ability; or if, after gaining such an ally, he should still fancy himself affected, he presently falls into a decline, under the incessant horror of impending calamities. The slightest painful sensation in the head, the bowels, or

[1] A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), pp. 91 *sq.* Compare *id.*, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), p. 118.

[2] Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone* (London, 1803), pp. 261 *sq.*

any other part, any casual loss or hurt, confirms his apprehensions, and he believes himself the devoted victim of an invisible and irresistible agency. Sleep, appetite and cheerfulness forsake him; his strength decays, his disturbed imagination is haunted without respite, his features wear the settled gloom of despondency: dirt, or any other unwholesome substance, becomes his only food, he contracts a morbid habit of body, and gradually sinks into the grave."[1] Superstition has killed him.

Conclusion.

Similar evidence might doubtless be multiplied, but the foregoing cases suffice to shew that among many peoples and in many parts of the world superstitious fear has operated as a powerful motive to deter men from stealing. If that is so, then my second proposition may be regarded as proved, namely, that among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for private property and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment.

[1] Bryan Edwards, *History, Civil and Commercial, of the British West Indies*, Fifth Edition (London, 1819), ii. 107-111.

IV

MARRIAGE

Superstition as a prop of sexual morality.

I PASS now to my third proposition, which is, that among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for marriage, and has thereby contributed to a stricter observance of the rules of sexual morality both among the married and the unmarried. That this is true will appear, I think, from the following instances.

Adultery or fornication supposed by the Karens to blight the crops.

Among the Karens of Burma "adultery, or fornication, is supposed to have a powerful influence to injure the crops. Hence, if there have been bad crops in a village for a year or two, and the rains fail, the cause is attributed to secret sins of this character, and they say the God of heaven and earth is angry with them on this account; and all the villagers unite in making an offering to appease him."

Pig's blood used to expiate the crime.

And when a case of adultery or fornication has come to light, "the elders decide that the transgressors must buy a hog, and kill it. Then the woman takes one foot of the hog, and the man takes another, and they scrape out furrows in the ground with each foot, which they fill with the blood of the hog. They next scratch the ground with their hands and pray: 'God of heaven and earth, God of the mountains and hills, I have destroyed the productiveness of the country. Do not be angry with me, do not hate me; but have mercy on me, and compassionate me. Now I repair the mountains, now I heal the hills, and the streams and the lands. May there be no failure of crops, may there be no unsuccessful labours, or unfortunate efforts in my country. Let them be dissipated to the foot of the horizon. Make thy paddy fruitful, thy rice abundant. Make the vegetables to flourish.

If we cultivate but little, still grant that we may obtain a little.' After each has prayed thus, they return to the house and say they have repaired the earth."[1] Thus, according to the Karens adultery and fornication are not simply moral offences which concern no one but the culprits and their families: they physically affect the course of nature by blighting the earth and destroying its fertility; hence they are public crimes which threaten the very existence of the whole community by cutting off its food supplies at the root. But the physical injury which these offences do to the soil can be physically repaired by saturating it with pig's blood.

Disastrous effects ascribed to sexual crime in Assam, Bengal, and Annam.

Some of the tribes of Assam similarly trace a connexion between the crops and the behaviour of the human sexes; for they believe that so long as the crops remain ungarnered, the slightest incontinence would ruin all.[2] Again, the inhabitants of the hills near Rajamahal in Bengal imagine that adultery, undetected and unexpiated, causes the inhabitants of the village to be visited by a plague or destroyed by tigers or other ravenous beasts. To prevent these evils an adulteress generally makes a clean breast. Her paramour has then to furnish a hog, and he and she are sprinkled with its blood, which is supposed to wash away their sin and avert the divine wrath. When a village suffers from plague or the ravages of wild beasts, the people religiously believe that the calamity is a punishment for secret immorality, and they resort to a curious form of divination to discover the culprits, in order that the crime may be duly expiated.[3] The Khasis of Assam are divided into a number of clans which are exogamous, that is to say, no man may marry a woman of his own clan. Should a man be found to cohabit with a woman of his own clan, it is treated as incest and is believed to cause great disasters; the people will be struck by light ning or killed by tigers, the women will die in child-bed, and

[1] Rev. F. Mason, D.D., "On Dwellings, Works of Art, Laws, etc., of the Karens," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, xxxvii. (1868) part ii. No. 3, pp. 147 *sq.* Compare A. R. McMahon, *The Karens of the Golden Chersonese* (London, 1876), pp. 334 *sq.*

[2] T. C. Hodson, "The *Genna* amongst the Tribes of Assam," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) p. 94.

[3] Lieutenant Thomas Shaw, "On the Inhabitants of the Hills near Rajamahall," *Asiatic Researches*, Fourth Edition, iv. (1807) pp. 60-62.

so forth. The guilty couple are taken by their clansmen to a priest and obliged to sacrifice a pig and a goat; after that they are made outcasts, for their offence is inexpiable.[1] The Orang Glai, a savage tribe in the mountains of Annam, similarly suppose that illicit love is punished by tigers, which devour the sinners. If a girl is found with child, her family offers a feast of pigs, fowls, and wine to appease the offended spirits.[2]

Similar views held by the Battas of Sumatra.

The Battas of Sumatra in like manner think that if an unmarried woman is with child, she must be given in marriage at once, even to a man of lower rank; for otherwise the people will be infested with tigers, and the crops in the fields will not be abundant. They also believe that the adultery of married women causes a plague of tigers, crocodiles, or other wild beasts. The crime of incest, in their opinion, would blast the whole harvest, if the wrong were not speedily repaired. Epidemics and other calamities that affect the whole people are almost always traced by them to incest, by which is to be understood any marriage that conflicts with their customs.[3] The natives of Nias, an island to the west of Sumatra, imagine that heavy rains are caused by the tears of a god weeping at the commission of adultery or fornication. The punishment for these crimes is death. The two delinquents, man and woman, are buried in a narrow grave with only their heads projecting above ground; then their throats are stabbed with a spear or cut with a knife, and the grave is filled up. Sometimes, it is said, they are buried alive. However, the judges are not always incorruptible and the injured family not always inaccessible to the allurement of gain; and pecuniary compensation is sometimes accepted as a sufficient salve for wounded honour. But if the wronged man is a chief, the culprits must surely die. As a consequence, perhaps, of this severity, the crimes

[1] Major P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1907), pp. 94, 123.

[2] É. Aymonier, "Notes sur l'Annam," *Excursions et Reconnaissances*, x. No. 24 (Saigon, 1885), pp. 308 *sq.*

[3] J. B. Neumann, "Het Pane en Bila-stroomgebied op het eiland Sumatra," *Tijdschrift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Tweede Serie, dl. iii., afdeeling, meer uitgebreide artikelen, No. 3 (Amsterdam, 1886), pp. 514 *sq.*; M. Joustra, "Het leven, de zeden en gewoonten der Bataks," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlvi. (1902) p. 411.

of adultery and fornication are said to be far less frequent in Nias than in Europe.[1]

Similar views prevail among many tribes in Borneo. Thus in regard to the Sea Dyaks we are told by Archdeacon Perham that "immorality among the unmarried is supposed to bring a plague of rain upon the earth, as a punishment inflicted by *Petara*. It must be atoned for with sacrifice and fine. In a function which is sometimes held to procure fine weather, the excessive rain is represented as the result of the immorality of two young people. *Petara* is invoked, the offenders are banished from their home, and the bad weather is said to cease. Every district traversed by an adulterer is believed to be accursed of the gods until the proper sacrifice has been offered."[2] When rain pours down day after day and the crops are rotting in the fields, these Dyaks come to the conclusion that some people have been secretly indulging in lusts of the flesh; so the elders lay their heads together and adjudicate on all cases of incest and bigamy, and purify the earth with the blood of pigs, which appears to these savages, as sheep's blood appeared to the ancient Hebrews, to possess the valuable property of atoning for moral guilt. Not long ago the offenders, whose lewdness had thus brought the whole country into danger, would have been punished with death or at least slavery. A Dyak may not marry his first cousin unless he first performs a special ceremony called *bergaput* to avert evil consequences from the land. The couple repair to the water-side, fill a small pitcher with their personal ornaments, and sink it in the river; or instead of a jar they fling a chopper and a plate into the water. A pig

Similar views among the tribes of Borneo.

Excessive rains thought by the Dyaks to be caused by sexual offences.

Blood of pigs shed to expiate incest and unchastity.

[1] H. Sundermann, *Die Insel Nias und die Mission daselbst* (Barmen, 1905), pp. 34 *sq.*, 37, 84. Compare A. Fehr, *Der Niasser im Leben und Sterben* (Barmen, 1901), pp. 34-36; Th. C. Rappard, "Het eiland Nias en zijne bewoners," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, lxii. (1909) pp. 594, 596. The death penalty for these offences has been abolished by the Dutch Government, so far as it can make its arm felt in the island.

[2] Rev. J. Perham, "Petara, or Sea Dyak Gods," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 8, December 1881, p. 150; H. Ling Roth, *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo* (London, 1896), i. 180. *Petara* is the general Dyak name for deity. The common idea is that there are many *petaras*, indeed that every man has his own. The word is said to be derived from Sanscrit and to be etymologically identical with *Avatar*, the Dyaks regularly substituting *p* or *b* for *v*. See Rev. J. Perham, *op. cit.* pp. 133 *sqq.*; H. Ling Roth's *Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo*, i. 168 *sqq.*

is then sacrificed on the bank, and its carcase, drained of blood, is thrown in after the jar. Next the pair are pushed into the water by their friends and ordered to bathe together. Lastly, a joint of bamboo is filled with pig's blood, and the couple perambulate the country and the villages round about, sprinkling the blood on the ground. After that they are free to marry. This is done, we are told, for the sake of the whole country, in order that the rice may not be blasted by the marriage of cousins.[1] Again, we are informed that the Sibuyaus, a Dyak tribe of Sarawak, are very careful of the honour of their daughters, because they imagine that if an unmarried girl is found to be with child it is offensive to the higher powers, who, instead of always chastising the culprits, punish the tribe by visiting its members with misfortunes. Hence when such a crime is detected they fine the lovers and sacrifice a pig to appease the angry powers and to avert the sickness or other calamities that might follow. Further, they inflict fines on the families of the couple for any severe accident or death by drowning that may have happened at any time within a month before the religious atonement was made; for they regard the families of the culprits as responsible for these mishaps. The fines imposed for serious or fatal accidents are heavy; for simple wounds they are lighter. With the fear of these fines before their eyes parents keep a watchful eye on the conduct of their daughters. Among the Dyaks of the Batang Lupar river the chastity of the unmarried girls is not so strictly guarded; but in respectable families, when a daughter proves frail, they sacrifice a pig and sprinkle its blood on the doors to wash away the sin.[2] The Hill Dyaks of Borneo abhor incest and do not allow the marriage even of cousins. In 1846 the Baddat Dyaks complained to Mr. Hugh Low that one of their chiefs had disturbed the peace and prosperity of the village by marrying his own granddaughter. Since that disastrous event, they said, no bright day had blessed their territory; rain and darkness alone prevailed, and unless the plague-spot were

[1] H. Ling Roth, "Low's Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxi. (1892) pp. 113 *sq.*, 133; compare *id.*, *ibid.* xxii. (1893) p. 24.

[2] Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, Second Edition (London, 1863), i. 63 *sq.*

removed, the tribe would soon be ruined. The old sinner was degraded from office, but apparently allowed to retain his wife; and the domestic brawls between this ill-assorted couple gave much pain to the virtuous villagers.[1]

Among the pagan tribes of Borneo in general, but of Sarawak in particular, "almost all offences are punished by fines only. Of the few offences which are felt to require a heavier punishment, the one most seriously regarded is incest. For this offence, which is held to bring grave peril to the whole house, especially the danger of starvation through failure of the *padi* crop, two punishments have been customary. If the guilt of the culprits is perfectly clear, they are taken to some open spot on the river-bank at some distance from the house. There they are thrown together upon the ground and a sharpened bamboo stake is driven through their bodies, so that they remain pinned to the earth. The bamboo, taking root and growing luxuriantly on this spot, remains as a warning to all who pass by; and, needless to say, the spot is looked on with horror and shunned by all men. The other method of punishment is to shut up the offenders in a strong wicker cage and to throw them into the river. This method is resorted to as a substitute for the former one, owing to the difficulty of getting any one to play the part of executioner and to drive in the stake, for this involves the shedding of the blood of the community. The kind of incest most commonly committed is the connection of a man with an adopted daughter, and (possibly on account of this frequency) this is the kind which is most strongly reprobated. . . . The punishment of the incestuous couple does not suffice to ward off the danger brought by them upon the community. The household must be purified with the blood of pigs and fowls; the animals used are the property of the offenders or of their family; and in this way a fine is imposed. When any calamity threatens or falls upon a house, especially a great rising of the river which threatens to sweep away the house or the tombs of the household, the Kayans are led to suspect that incestuous intercourse in their own or in neighbouring houses has taken place; and they look round for evidences of it, and sometimes detect a case which otherwise would

Incest punished with death by the pagan tribes of Borneo.

[1] Hugh Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), pp. 300 *sq.*

have remained hidden. It seems probable that there is some intimate relation between this belief and the second of the two modes of punishment described above; but we have no direct evidence of such connection. All the other peoples also, except the Punans, punish incest with death. Among the Sea Dyaks the most common form of incest is that between a youth and his aunt, and this is regarded at least as seriously as any other form."[1]

Evil and confusion supposed by the Dyaks to be wrought by fornication.

Nor is it the heinous crime of incest alone which in the opinion of the Sea Dyaks endangers the whole community. The same effect is supposed to follow whenever an unmarried woman is found with child and cannot or will not name her seducer. "The greatest disgrace," we are told, "is attached to a woman found in a state of pregnancy, without being able to name her husband; and cases of self-poisoning, to avoid the shame, are not of unusual occurrence. If one be found in this state, a fine must be paid of pigs and other things. Few even of the chiefs will come forward without incurring considerable responsibility. A pig is killed, which nominally becomes the father, for want, it is supposed, of another and better one. Then the surrounding neighbours have to be furnished with a share of the fine to banish the *Jabu*, which exists after such an event. If the fine be not forthcoming, the woman dare not move out of her room, for fear of being molested, as she is supposed to have brought evil (*kudi*) and confusion upon the inhabitants and their belongings."[2]

Similar beliefs and customs among the tribes of Dutch Borneo.

The foregoing accounts refer especially to the tribes of Borneo under British rule; but similar ideas and customs prevail among the kindred tribes of Dutch Borneo. Thus the Kayans or Bahaus in the interior of the island believe that adultery is punished by the spirits, who visit the whole tribe with failure of the crops and other misfortunes. Hence in order to avert these evil consequences from the innocent members of the tribe, the two culprits, with all their possessions, are first placed on a gravel bank in the middle of the river, in order to isolate or, in electrical

[1] Charles Hose and William McDougall, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (London, 1912), ii. 196-199.

[2] Charles Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak* (London, 1866), i. 69 *sq.*

language, to insulate them and so prevent the moral or rather physical infection from spreading. Then pigs and fowls are killed, and with the blood priestesses smear the property of the guilty pair in order to disinfect it. Finally, the two are placed on a raft, with sixteen eggs, and allowed to drift down stream. They may save themselves by plunging into the water and swimming ashore; but this is perhaps a mitigation of an older sentence of death by drowning, for young people still shower long grass stalks, representing spears, at the shamefaced and dripping couple.[1] Certain it is, that some Dyak tribes used to punish incest by fastening the man and woman in separate baskets laden with stones and drowning them in the river. By incest they understood the cohabitation of parents with children, of brothers with sisters, and of uncles and aunts with nieces and nephews. A Dutch resident had much difficulty in saving the life of an uncle and niece who had married each other; finally he procured their banishment to a distant part of Borneo.[2] The Blu-u Kayans, another tribe in the interior of Borneo, believe that an intrigue between an unmarried pair is punished by the spirits with failure of the harvest, of the fishing, and of the hunt. Hence the delinquents have to appease the wrath of the spirits by sacrificing a pig and a certain quantity of rice.[3] In Pasir, a district of Eastern Borneo, incest is thought to bring dearth, epidemics, and all sorts of evils on the land.[4] In the island of Ceram a man convicted of unchastity has to smear every house in the village with the blood of a pig and a fowl: this is supposed to wipe out his guilt and ward off misfortunes from the village.[5]

When the harvest fails in Southern Celebes, the Macassars and Bugineese regard it as a sure sign that incest has been committed and that the spirits are angry. In the years 1877 and 1878 it happened that the west monsoon did not

Failure of the crops and other disasters thought to be caused by incest in Celebes.

[1] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904–1907), i. 367.

[2] M. T. H. Perelaer, *Ethnographische Beschrijving der Dajaks* (Zalt-Bommel, 1870), pp. 59 *sq.*

[3] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, ii. 99; *id.*, *In Centraal Borneo* (Leyden, 1900), ii. 278.

[4] A. H. F. J. Nusselein, "Beschrijving van het landschap Pasir," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, lviii. (1905) p. 538.

[5] A. Bastian, *Indonesien*, i. (Berlin, 1884) p. 144.

blow and that the rice crop in consequence came to nothing; moreover many buffaloes died of a murrain. At the same time there was in the gaol at Takalar a prisoner, who had been formerly accused of incest. Some of the people of his district begged the Dutch governor to give the criminal up to them, for according to the general opinion the plagues would never cease till the guilty man had received the punishment he deserved. All the governor's powers of persuasion were needed to induce the petitioners to return quietly to their villages; and when the prisoner, having served his time, was released shortly afterwards, he was, at his own request, given an opportunity of sailing away to another land, as he no longer felt safe in his own country.[1]

Disastrous effects supposed to follow from shedding the blood of incestuous couples on the ground.

Even when the incestuous couple has been brought to justice, their blood may not be shed; for the people think that, were the ground to be polluted by the blood of such criminals, the rivers would dry up and the supply of fish would run short, the harvest and the produce of the gardens would miscarry, edible fruits would fail, sickness would be rife among cattle and horses, civil strife would break out, and the country would suffer from other widespread calamities. Hence the punishment of the guilty is such as to avoid the spilling of their blood: usually they are tied up in a sack and thrown into the sea to drown. Yet they get on their journey to eternity the necessary provisions, consisting of a bag of rice, salt, dried fish, coco-nuts, and other things, among which three quids of betel are not forgotten.[2] We can now perhaps understand why the Romans used to sew up a parricide in a sack with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape for company, and fling him into the sea. They probably feared to defile the soil of Italy by spilling upon it the blood of such a miscreant.[3] Amongst the Tomori of Central Celebes

[1] G. A. Wilken, *Verspreide Geschriften* (The Hague, 1912), ii. 335 ("Huwelijken tusschen bloedverwanten," p. 26).

[2] B. F. Matthes, "Over de *ādā's* of gewoonten der Makassaren en Boegineezen," *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afdeeling Letterkunde, Derde Reeks, ii. (Amsterdam, 1885) p. 182.

[3] *Digest*, xlviii. 9. 9, "*Poena parricidii more majorum haec instituta est, ut parricida virgis sanguineis verberatus deinde culleo insuatur cum cane, gallo gallinaceo et vipera et simia: deinde in mare profundum culleus jactatur.*" Compare Valerius Maximus, i. 1. 13; Professor J. E. B. Mayor's note on Juvenal, viii. 214. If the view suggested above is correct, the scourging of the criminal to the effusion of blood (*virgis san-*

a person guilty of incest is throttled; no drop of his blood may fall on the ground, for if it did, the rice would never grow again. The union of uncle with niece is regarded by these people as incest, but it can be expiated by an offering. A garment of the man and one of the woman are laid on a copper vessel; the blood of a sacrificed animal, either a goat or a fowl, is allowed to drip on the garments, and then the vessel with its contents is set floating down the river.[1] Among the Tololaki, another tribe of Central Celebes, persons who have defiled themselves with incest are shut up in a basket and drowned. No drop of their blood may be spilt on the ground, for that would hinder the earth from ever bearing fruit again.[2] Among the Bare'e-speaking Toradjas of Central Celebes in general the penalty for incest, that is for the sexual intercourse of parents with children or of brothers with sisters, is death. But whereas the death-sentence for adultery is executed with a spear or a sword, the death-sentence for incest is usually executed among the inland tribes by clubbing or throttling; for were the blood of the culprits to drip on the ground, the earth would be rendered barren. The people on the coast put the guilty pair in a basket, weight it with stones, and fling it into the sea. This prescribed manner of putting the incestuous to death, we are informed, makes the execution very grievous. However, the writers who furnish us with these particulars and who have lived among the people on terms of intimacy for many years, add that "incest seldom occurs, or rather the cases that come to light are very few."[3] In some districts of Central Celebes, the marriage of cousins, provided they are children of two sisters, is forbidden under pain of death; the people think that such an alliance would anger the spirits, and that the rice and maize harvests would fail. Strictly speaking, two such cousins who have committed the

guineis verberatus) must have been a later addition to the original penalty, unless indeed some provision were made for catching the blood before it fell on the ground.

[1] A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige aanteekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoe en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xliv. (1900) p. 235.

[2] A. C. Kruijt, "Van Posso naar Mori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xliv. (1900) p. 162.

[3] N. Adriani en Alb. C. Kruijt, *De Bare'e-sprekende Toradja's van Midden-Celebes*, i. (Batavia, 1912) p. 187.

offence should be tied together, weighted with stones, and thrown into water to drown. In practice, however, the culprits are spared and their sin expiated by shedding the blood of a buffalo or a goat. The blood is mixed with water and sprinkled on the rice-fields or poured on the maize-fields, no doubt in order to appease the angry spirits and restore its fertility to the tilled land. The natives of these districts believe that were a brother and sister to commit incest, the ground on which the tribe dwells would be swallowed up. If such a crime takes place, the guilty pair are tied together, their feet weighted with stones, and thrown into the sea.[1]

Excessive rains, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions supposed to be produced by incest in Halmahera.

When it rains in torrents, the Galelareese of Halmahera, another large East Indian island, say that brother and sister, or father and daughter, or in short some near kinsfolk are having illicit relations with each other, and that every human being must be informed of it, for then only will the rain cease to descend. The superstition has repeatedly caused blood relations to be accused, rightly or wrongly, of incest. Further, the people think that alarming natural phenomena, such as a violent earthquake or the eruption of a volcano, are caused by crimes of the same sort. Persons charged with such offences are brought to Ternate; it is said that formerly they were often drowned on the way or, on being haled thither, were condemned to be thrown into the volcano.[2] In the Banggai Archipelago, to the east of Celebes, earthquakes are explained as punishments inflicted by evil spirits for indulgence in illicit love.[3]

Breaches of sexual morality thought to

In some parts of Africa, also, it is believed that breaches of sexual morality disturb the course of nature, particularly by blighting the fruits of the earth; and probably such views

[1] Hissink, "Nota van toelichting, betreffende de zelbesturende landschappen Paloe, Dolo, Sigi, en Beromaroe," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, liv. (1912), p. 115.

[2] M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xlv. (1895) p. 514. In a letter to me of 14th March 1909 Sir John Rhŷs compares a Welsh expression, "Rain through sunshine, the devil going on his wife." He adds: "I do not think I ever heard it except when it was actually raining during sunshine. I can now see that instead of *ar i wraig* the original must have been *ar i fam* 'on his mother.' In fact I am not at all sure but that I have heard it so."

[3] F. S. A. de Clerq, *Bijdragen tot de kennis der Residentie Ternate* (Leyden, 1890), p. 132.

are much more widely diffused in that continent than the scanty and fragmentary evidence at our disposal might lead us to suppose. Thus, the negroes of Loango, in West Africa, imagine that the commerce of a man with an immature girl is punished by God with drought and consequent famine until the transgressors expiate their transgression by dancing naked before the king and an assembly of the people, who throw hot gravel and bits of glass at the pair as they run the gauntlet. The rains in that country should fall in September, but in 1898 there was a long drought, and when the month of December had nearly passed, the sun-scorched stocks of the fruitless Indian corn shook their rustling leaves in the wind, the beans lay shrivelled and black on the ruddy soil, and the shoots of the sweet potato had flowered and withered long ago. The people cried out against their rulers for neglecting their duty to the primeval powers of the earth; the priests of the sacred groves had recourse to divination and discovered that God was angry with the land on account of the immorality of certain persons unknown, who were not observing the traditions and laws of their God and country. The feeble old king had fled, but the slave who acted as regent in his room sent word to the chiefs that there were people in their towns who were the cause of God's wrath. So every chief called his subjects together and caused enquiries to be made, and then it was discovered that three girls had broken the customs of their country; for they were with child before they had passed through what is called the paint-house, that is, before they had been painted red and secluded for a season in token that they had attained to the age of puberty. The people were incensed and endeavoured to punish or even kill the three girls; and the English writer who has recorded the case has thought it worth while to add that on the very morning when the culprits were brought before the magistrate rain fell.[1] Amongst the Bavili of Loango, who are divided into totemic clans, no man is allowed to marry a woman of his mother's clan; and God is

blight the fruits of the earth and otherwise disturb the course of nature in Africa.

[1] O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686), p. 326; R. E. Dennett, *At the Back of the Black Man's Mind* (London, 1906), pp. 53, 67-71.

believed to punish a breach of this marriage law by withholding the rains in their due season.[1] Similar notions of the blighting influence of sexual crime appear to be entertained by the Nandi of British East Africa; for we are told that when a warrior has got a girl with child, she "is punished by being put in Coventry, none of her girl friends being allowed to speak to or look at her until after the child is born and buried. She is also regarded with contempt for the rest of her life and may never look inside a granary for fear of spoiling the corn."[2] Among the Basutos in like manner "while the corn is exposed to view, all defiled persons are carefully kept from it. If the aid of a man in this state is necessary for carrying home the harvest, he remains at some distance while the sacks are filled, and only approaches to place them upon the draught oxen. He withdraws as soon as the load is deposited at the dwelling, and under no pretext can he assist in pouring the corn into the basket in which it is preserved."[3] The nature of the defilement which thus disqualifies a man from handling the corn is not mentioned, but we may conjecture that unchastity would fall under this general head. For amongst the Basutos after a child is born a fresh fire has to be kindled in the dwelling by the friction of wood, and this must be done by a young man of chaste habits; it is believed that an untimely death awaits him who should dare to discharge this holy office after having lost his innocence.[4] In Morocco whoever enters a granary must first remove his slippers and must be sexually clean. Were an unclean person to enter, the people believe not only that the grain would lose its blessed influence (*baraka*), but that he himself would fall ill. A Berber told Dr. Westermarck

Sexual purity required of those who handle corn or enter a granary.

[1] R. E. Dennett, *op. cit.* p. 52.

[2] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi, their Language and Folk-lore* (Oxford, 1909), p. 76.

[3] Rev. E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), p. 252.

[4] Rev. E. Casalis, *The Basutos*, p. 267. The writer tells us (pp. 255 *sq.*) that "death with all that immediately precedes or follows it, is in the eyes of these people the greatest of all defilements. Thus the sick, persons who have touched or buried a corpse, or who have dug the grave, individuals who inadvertently walk over or sit upon a grave, the near relatives of a person deceased, murderers, warriors who have killed their enemies in battle, are all considered impure." No doubt all such persons would also be prohibited from handling the corn.

that he had suffered from painful boils through entering a granary in a state of uncleanness.[1] The same rule applies in Morocco to a vegetable garden. Only the sexually clean may enter it, otherwise both the vegetables and the person entering would be the worse for it.[2]

Incest supposed by the Dinkas to be punished with sterility.

The Dinkas of the Upper Nile believe that incest angers the ancestral spirits (*jok*), who punish the girl by making her barren. Even should she marry, she will have no children until she has confessed her sin, and atonement has been made for it. Her lover must provide a bullock for sacrifice. His father kills the animal, and the girl's father takes some of the contents of the large intestine and smears it on his daughter's abdomen and on that of her guilty partner. Thus the taint of sin is removed, and the woman is rendered capable of bearing children.[3] The Maloulekes and Hlengoues, two tribes of Southern Africa to the north of the Thonga, think that if a young man gets a girl, who is not his wife, with child, people will die in the village. Hence, when the girl's pregnancy is discovered, the lover has to provide a girl by way of fine.[4]

Incest enjoined in certain cases as a mode of ensuring good luck.

It is very remarkable, however, that among tribes which strongly disapprove of incestuous relations in general, the act of incest is nevertheless positively enjoined in certain circumstances as a mode of ensuring good luck. Thus in the Thonga tribe of South-Eastern Africa, round about Delagoa Bay, there is a class of men who devote themselves to the business of hunting hippopotamuses on the rivers. In the pursuit of their trade they observe a number of curious superstitions which have been handed down among them for generations from father to son. For example, they inoculate themselves with a certain drug which is supposed to endow them with such a power over the hippopotamuses that when the hunter wounds one of them the animal cannot go far away and the man can track and

[1] Edward Westermarck, *Ceremonies and Beliefs connected with Agriculture, Certain Dates of the Solar Year, and the Weather in Morocco* (Helsingfors, 1913), p. 46.

[2] E. Westermarck, *op. cit.* p. 54; compare pp. 17, 23, 47.

[3] C. G. Seligmann, *s.v.* "Dinka," in Dr. J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, iv. (Edinburgh, 1911) p. 709.

[4] Henri A. Junod, "Les conceptions physiologiques des Bantou Sud-Africains et leurs tabous," *Revue d' Ethnographie et de Sociologie*, i. (1910) p. 146 note 2.

despatch it. During the day the hunter fishes in the river, keeping his eye all the time on the unwieldy monsters disporting themselves in the water or lumbering through the thickets on the banks. "When he sees that the propitious season has come and when he is ready to undertake a hunting expedition of one month, he first calls his own daughter to his hut and has sexual relations with her. This incestuous act, which is strongly taboo in ordinary life, has made of him a 'murderer': he has killed something at home; he has acquired the courage for doing great deeds on the river. Henceforth he will have no sexual relations with his wives during the whole campaign. On the same night, immediately after the act, he starts with his sons; they close the drift where the beasts leave the river by putting a canoe across the track." Meantime the hippopotamuses are browsing in the forest or trampling down the crops of the fields in their clumsy fashion. As they come trooping back to the river they are stopped by the canoe in the path, and while they are examining the strange obstacle, the hunters, lying in ambush, dart their spears into the thick hides of the beasts. The handles of the spears are loosely attached to the blades, but connected with them by a long string, so that when the wounded monster, crashing irresistibly in his rage through the thicket, plunges into the river and sinks out of sight in the water, the handle of the spear becomes detached from the blade and floats like a buoy on the surface, shewing the direction taken by the beast. As soon as the hunter has thrown his spear he runs home to tell his wife. She must at once shut herself up in the hut and remain perfectly quiet, without eating or drinking or crushing her mealies; for were she to do any of these things, the wounded hippopotamus would shew fight and might kill her husband, whereas if she keeps quiet, the animal will be quiet too. All the hunters in the village are then called up, and embarking in a canoe, paddle away after their prey, whose retreat is marked by the bobbing of the spear-handle on the surface of the water and the occasional emergence of a great flat snout to breathe. When the beast has been despatched, and the carcase landed on the bank, it is turned on its back and the hunter creeps between its legs

Incest of Thonga hippopotamus hunter with his daughter.

from behind and along its belly and chest as far as the mouth. Then he goes away. By this ceremony the man is supposed to take upon himself the defilement, possibly the nature, of the animal, so that in future when he meets hippopotamuses the animals will not perceive him to be a man but will mistake him for an hippopotamus; and thus he will be able to slaughter the deluded creatures with impunity.[1]

Suggested explanation of the Thonga practice.

So far as we can guess at the meaning of these curious rites, their general intention seems to be to identify the hunter and his family with the game which he hunts in order to give him full power over the animals. This intention is manifested in the behaviour of the hunter's wife while the hippopotamus is wounded; she so far identifies herself with the animal that whatever she does he is supposed to do. If she goes about her work briskly and refreshes herself with food and drink, the hippopotamus also will be brisk and refreshed, and will give warm work to his pursuers; whereas if she keeps perfectly still, the animal will make no resistance but follow the hunters like a sheep to the slaughter. Perhaps the same train of thought partially explains the incest which the hunter has to commit with his own daughter before he sets out for the chase. Can it be that by this violence done to his offspring he is supposed to acquire power over the beast? It may be so, yet it is difficult to see why the violence should take this particular form, and why, on the principles of homoeopathic or imitative magic, a pretence of wounding and killing the girl with a spear would not have served his turn better.

Incest prescribed among the Antambahoaka of Madagascar.

Another tribe of savages who imagine that in certain circumstances incest is the road to fortune are the Antambahoaka of South-Eastern Madagascar. Before setting out for the chase or the fishing or war or other enterprise, every Antambahoaka arranges to have sexual relations with his sister or with his nearest female relation; he thinks in this way to ensure the success of his expedition.[2] What the

[1] Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchatel, 1912–1913), ii. 60-62.

[2] A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), pp. 342 *sq.*, quoting the evidence of M. Gabriel Ferrand. Similar testimony was given to me verbally by M. Ferrand at Paris, 19th April, 1910. Compare Gabriel Ferrand, *Les Musulmans à*

exact train of thought may be which prompts these exceptional and deliberate aberrations from the usual rules of morality, it is difficult to understand; I mention the facts because they apparently contradict the ordinary savage view of conduct, and so far help us to perceive how little as yet we really know about the inmost workings of the savage mind.

Similar beliefs as to the disastrous effect of sexual crimes among the civilized peoples of antiquity.

The Hebrews.

Leaving out of account these remarkable and as yet not fully explained exceptions to the rule,[1] we may say generally that among many savage races breaches of the marriage laws are believed to draw down on the community public calamities of the most serious character, and that in particular they are thought to blast the fruits of the earth through excessive rain or excessive drought. Traces of similar beliefs may perhaps be detected among the civilized races of antiquity. Thus among the Hebrews we read how Job, passionately protesting his innocence before God, declares that he is no adulterer; "For that," says he, "were an heinous crime; yea it were an iniquity to be punished by the judges: for it is a fire that consumeth unto Destruction, and would root out all mine increase."[2] In this passage the Hebrew word translated "increase" commonly means "the produce of the earth";[3] and if we give the word its usual sense here, then Job affirms adultery to be destructive of the fruits of the ground, which is precisely what many savages still believe. This interpretation of his words is strongly confirmed by two narratives in Genesis, where we read how Sarah, Abraham's

Madagascar et aux Iles Comores, Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1893), pp. 20 *sq.*

[1] In Fiji the rite of circumcision used to be followed by sexual orgies in which brothers and sisters appear to have been intentionally coupled. See Rev. Lorimer Fison, "The Nanga, or Sacred Stone Enclosure of Wainimala, Fiji," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiv. (1885) pp. 27-30, with the note of Sir Edward B. Tylor on pp. 28 *sq.*; *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. 145-148. Such periods of general licence accorded to the whole community are perhaps best explained as temporary revivals of an old custom of sexual communism. But this explanation seems scarcely applicable to cases like those cited in the text, where the licence is not granted to the whole people but enjoined on a few individuals only in special circumstances. As to other apparent cases of reversion to primitive sexual communism, see *Totemism and Exogamy*, i. 311 *sqq.*

[2] Job xxxi. 11 *sq.* (Revised Version).

[3] תְּבוּאָה. See *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, by F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and Ch. A. Briggs (Oxford, 1906), p. 100.

wife, was taken by a king into his harem, and how thereafter God visited the king and his household with great plagues, especially by closing up the wombs of the king's wife and his maid-servants so that they bare no children. It was not till the king had discovered and confessed his sin, and Abraham had prayed God to forgive him, that the king's women again became fruitful.[1] These narratives seem to imply that adultery, even when it is committed in ignorance, is a cause of plague and especially of sterility among women. Again, in Leviticus, after a long list of sexual crimes, we read:[2] "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants." This passage seems to imply that the land itself was somehow physically affected by sexual transgressions in such a way that it could no longer support the inhabitants. Apparently the ancient Greeks entertained a similar view of the wasting effect of incest; for according to Sophocles the land of Thebes suffered from blight, pestilence, and the sterility both of women and cattle under the reign of Oedipus, who had unwittingly slain his father and married his mother; the country was emptied of its inhabitants, and the Delphic oracle declared that the only way to restore prosperity to it was to banish the sinner.[3] No doubt the poet and his hearers set down these public calamities in part to the guilt of parricide which rested on Oedipus; but probably they also laid much of the evil at the door of the incest which he had committed with his mother. In the reign of the emperor Claudius a Roman noble was accused of incest with his sister. He committed suicide, his sister was banished, and the emperor ordered that certain ancient ceremonies derived from the laws of King Servius Tullius should be performed, and that expiation should be made by the pontiffs at the sacred grove of Diana.[4] As Diana appears to have been a goddess of fertility in general and of the

The Greeks.

The Romans.

[1] Genesis xii. 10-20, xx. 1-18.

[2] Leviticus xviii. 24 *sq.*

[3] Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 22 *sqq.*, 95 *sqq.*

[4] Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 4 and 8.

fruitfulness of women in particular,[1] the expiation for incest offered at her sanctuary may perhaps be accepted as evidence that the Romans, like other peoples, attributed to sexual immorality a tendency to blast the fruits both of the earth and of the womb.

Blighting effect attributed to incest by the ancient Irish.

According to an ancient Irish legend Munster was afflicted in the third century of our era with a failure of the crops and other misfortunes. When the nobles enquired into the matter, they learned that these calamities were the result of an incest which the king had committed with his sister. In order to put an end to the evil they demanded of the king his two sons, the fruit of this unholy union, that they might consume them with fire and cast their ashes into the running stream.[2] Again, Irish legend relates that Cairbre Musc "had two sons by his sister. Her name was Duben, and theirs were Corc and Cormac respectively. The children were twins, and the story of their birth is no less strange than that of Dylan and Llew, for one of them was found to have nipped off his brother's ears before his birth. The crime of their parents caused the crops to fail, which, according to the idea prevalent in ancient Ireland, was its natural result, and Cairbre was obliged to confess his guilt to the nobles of his realm, who, when the children were born, ordered them to be burnt, that the incest might not remain in the land. 'Give me,' said Cairbre's druid, that *Corc*[3] there, that I may place him outside Erinn, so that the incest may not be within it.' Corc was given to the druid, and the latter, with his wife, whose name was Bói, took him to an island. They had a white cow with red ears, and an ablution was performed by them every morning on Corc, placed on the cow's back; so in a year's time to the day the cow sprang away from them into the sea, and she became a rock in it; to wit, the heathenism of the boy had entered into her. *Bó Búi*, or Bói's Cow, is the name of the rock, and *Inis Búi*, or Bói's Isle, that of the island. The boy was

[1] See *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 12, 14 *sqq.*

[2] G. Keating, *History of Ireland*, translated by J. O'Mahony (New York, 1857), pp. 337 *sq.*; P. W. Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland* (London, 1903), ii. 512 *sq.*

[3] "Corc means croppy or cropped: in this instance the name refers to the bearer's ears, and the verb used as to the action of his brother maiming him is *ro-chorc.*"

afterwards brought back into Erinn. Such is the story how Corc was purged of the virulence of his original sin, and the scene is one of the three islets called the Bull, the Cow and the Calf, not far from Dursey Island, in the gulf called Kenmare River."[1]

Thus sexual irregularities are often supposed to endanger the whole community.

Thus it appears that in the opinion of many peoples sexual irregularities, whether of the married or the unmarried, are not merely moral offences which affect only the few persons immediately concerned; they are believed to involve the whole people in danger and disaster either directly by a sort of magical influence or indirectly by rousing the wrath of gods to whom these acts are offensive. Nay they are often supposed to strike a blow at the very existence of the community by blighting the fruits of the earth and thereby cutting off the food supply. Wherever these superstitions prevail, it is obvious that public opinion and public justice will treat sexual offences with far greater severity than is meted out to them by peoples who, like most civilized nations, regard such misdemeanours as matters of private rather than of public concern, as sins rather than crimes, which may perhaps affect the eternal welfare of the individual sinner in a life hereafter, but which do not in any way imperil the temporal welfare of the innocent community as a whole. And conversely, wherever we find that incest, adultery, and fornication are treated by the community with extreme rigour, we may reasonably infer that the original motive for such treatment was superstition; in other words, that wherever a tribe or nation, not content with leaving these transgressions to be avenged by the injured parties, has itself punished them with exceptional severity, the reason for doing so has probably been a belief that the effect of all such delinquencies is to disturb the course of nature and thereby to endanger the whole people, who accordingly must protect themselves by effectually disarming and, if necessary, exterminating the delinquents. This may explain, for example, why the Indian Laws of Manu decreed that an adulteress should be devoured by dogs in a public place, and that an adulterer should be roasted to death on a red-hot iron

Hence the extreme rigour with which sexual crimes have been punished by many races.

Ancient codes.

[1] (Sir) John Rhŷs, *Celtic Heathendom* (London and Edinburgh, 1888), pp. 308 *sq.*, referring to the *Book of the Dun*, 54*a*.

bed;[1] why the Babylonian code of Hammurabi sentenced an adulterous couple to be strangled and cast into the river; and why the same code punished incest with a mother by burning both the culprits.[2] On the same supposition we can understand the severity of the punishments meted out to certain sexual offences by the Mosaic law. Thus, for example, under it an adulteress and her paramour were sentenced to death:[3] a woman who at marriage was found not to be a maid was stoned:[4] the unchaste daughter of a priest was burned with fire;[5] and if a man married a woman and her daughter, he and they were in like manner doomed to the flames.[6]

Rigorous penalties inflicted in Africa.

The Baganda, their punishments for breaches of sexual morality.

Many African tribes repress sexual crimes by rigorous penalties, or did so until their moral standard was modified by contact with Europeans. Among the Baganda of Central Africa, "though death was usually the punishment inflicted for adultery, an offender's life would sometimes be spared, and he be fined two women, if he were able to pay them; the culprit was, however, maimed; he lost a limb, or had an eye gouged out, and showed by his maimed condition that he had been guilty of a crime. A slave taken in adultery with one of his master's wives was invariably put to death. Women were compelled by torture to name their seducers; if the accused man denied the charge, the woman was asked to describe some personal peculiarity of his, or some mark on his body which could be identified; then if the man was found to have the peculiarity, he was either fined or put to death. In order to arrive at the truth, a man who denied a charge made against him was sometimes stretched out with his arms and feet tied to stakes driven firmly into the ground, a piece of barkcloth was then fastened about his private parts, and set smouldering. As soon as the fire reached his body, the pain became too great

[1] *Laws of Manu*, viii. 371 *sq.*, translated by G. Bühler, pp. 318 *sq.* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxv.). Compare *Gautama*, xxiii. 14 *sq.*, translated by G. Bühler, p. 285 (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. ii.).

[2] *Code of Hammurabi*, §§ 129, 157, C. H. W. Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts and Letters* (Edinburgh, 1904), pp. 54, 56; Robert W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (Oxford, preface dated 1911), pp. 427, 434.

[3] Deuteronomy xxii. 22.

[4] Deuteronomy xxii. 20 *sq.*

[5] Leviticus xxi. 9.

[6] Leviticus xx. 14.

to bear, and the man would own himself guilty in order to be released from torture. He would then be either killed or fined. An adulterer was called a murderer (*musi*), because he was looked upon as a man who deliberately set about to compass the death of the woman's husband; either directly, for he would go armed to visit the woman, and if he was disturbed, he would not hesitate to strike; or indirectly, by offending the fetiches. Men knew that, if they were caught in the act of adultery, the penalty would be death, unless they were related to the person wronged, in which case the latter might be willing to accept a fine, and might content himself with mutilating the culprit. The worst consequence to the injured husband was the anger of his fetiches and gods, whose custodian was his wife. By her action the wife had involved her husband in their displeasure; he was thus left exposed to the malice of any enemy, and his danger was increased in the time of war, because the gods had withdrawn their protection from him."[1] Thus among the Baganda adultery was regarded not simply as a civil offence but as a sin, which brought down the anger of the gods, not as we might expect, on the adulterer, but on the injured husband. Further, the Baganda were divided into a number of totemic clans, and members of any one clan were strictly prohibited from marrying or having sexual relations with each other. "Sexual intercourse with a member of the same clan (*kive*), or with a woman of the mother's clan, was punished by the death of both parties, because they were considered to have brought the god's displeasure on the whole clan."[2]

Among the Basoga, who border on the Baganda to the east, when a man got a virgin with child, the guilty couple used to be dragged off to the River Ntakwe; there stones were tied to their ankles and legs, and, along with a sacrificial sheep, they were thrown into the water and drowned. However, this rigorous penalty was abolished and a fine substituted before the country came under British rule.[3] Among the Kavirondo, who border on the Basoga to the

Fornication, adultery, and incest severely punished by other African tribes.

[1] Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 261 *sq.*

[2] Rev. J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* p. 262. As to the totemic clans, see *id.* pp. 133 *sqq.* One clan (the Lung-fish clan) was excepted from the rule.

[3] Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1904), ii. 719.

east, "until quite recently adultery on the part of a wife was punished with death, and death equally was meted out to young men and girls who were found guilty of fornication. It was thought a shameful thing if a girl was not found to be a virgin on her wedding day."[1] Among the Nandi, who border on the Kavirondo to the north-east, "incest, intercourse with a step-mother, step-daughter, cousin or other near relation, is punished by what is known as *injoket.* A crowd of people assemble outside the house of the culprit, who is dragged out, and the punishment is inflicted by the women, all of whom, both young and old, strip for the occasion. The man is flogged, his houses and crops destroyed, and some of his stock confiscated."[2] Among the Barea, a tribe on the borders of Abyssinia, when a single woman, whether maid or widow, is found with child, she is strangled by her father or brother, and the same punishment is inflicted on her seducer; the child of their unlawful union is stabbed. This custom is rigorously carried out, except when the seducer is a noble and his paramour a vassal; in that case both are spared, but the infant is killed.[3] Among the Beni Amer, another tribe of the same region, an unmarried girl found pregnant is put to death by her own brother, whatever her rank, and the seducer is killed by his own brother; the child also is slain. But the law is not so severe on a widow or divorced wife who is detected in a slip; her seducer has only to pay a fine; but the child is buried alive. The Beni Amer will not suffer a bastard to live.[4] Among the Anyanja of British Central Africa adultery was punished by drowning and shooting. If one of the culprits was a chief's wife, she was tied to her paramour, and the pair were then thrown into a river to drown or left in the open space of the village to die of hunger and exposure. A man who had committed a rape was bound, weighted with stones, and cast into the lake.[5] Among the Awemba of Northern Rhodesia,

[1] Sir Harry Johnston, *op. cit.* ii. 746 *sq.*

[2] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 76.

[3] Werner Munzinger, *Ostafrikanische Studien* (Schaffhausen, 1864), p. 243.

[4] W. Munzinger, *op. cit.* p. 322. However, the child of an unmarried slave woman is brought up; the father pays for its nurture.

[5] H. S. Stannus, "Notes on some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 290.

when a husband detected his wife in the act of adultery, he killed both her and her partner in guilt. For such execution he might not be indicted for murder or manslaughter. He would merely return the blood-stained spear to the woman's father, who by his words in the marriage ceremony, "You shall spear the man who lusts after your wife," was estopped from taking vengeance for the death of his daughter. If the husband spared the erring couple and the wife was again taken in adultery, the villagers themselves decreed the punishment. The unfaithful wife and her lover were dragged outside the village and impaled on sharp stakes amid the taunts and jeers of the bystanders, who only desisted from their mockery when death had stilled the writhing agony of the sufferers.[1] "The Hottentots," says an old writer, "allow not marriages between first or second cousins. They have a traditionary law, which ordains, that both man and woman, so near to each other in blood, who shall be convicted of joining together either in marriage or fornication, shall be cudgel'd to death. This law, they say, has prevail'd through all the generations of 'em; and that they execute it at once, upon a conviction, without any regard to wealth, power or affinity."[2]

Incest and adultery severely punished in the East Indies.

We have seen that in the East Indies sexual crimes, particularly incest, adultery, and fornication, are often viewed with grave displeasure because they are believed to draw down the wrath of the higher powers on the whole community. Hence it is natural that such offences should be treated as high treason and the offenders punished with death. A common punishment is drowning. For example, when incest between a parent and a child or between a brother and a sister has been detected among the Kubus, a primitive aboriginal tribe of Sumatra, the culprits are enclosed in a large fish-trap, made of rattan or bamboo, and sunk in a deep pool of the river. However, they are not pinioned; nay, they are even furnished with a tin knife, and

[1] Cullen Gouldsbury and Hubert Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), p. 57.

[2] Peter Kolben, *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, Second Edition (London, 1738), i. 157. For more examples of the death penalty inflicted for breaches of sexual morality in Africa, see A. H. Post, *Afrikanische Jurisprudenz* (Olbenburg and Leipsic, 1887), ii. 69 *sqq.*

if they can cut their way out of the trap, rise through the bubbling water to the surface, and swim ashore, they are allowed to live.[1] In the island of Bali incest and adultery are punished by drowning; the criminals are sewed up in a sack half-filled with stones and rice and cast into the sea. A like doom is incurred by a woman who marries a man of a lower caste; but sometimes she dies a more dreadful death, being burnt alive. Both modes of execution may be adopted in order to avoid shedding the blood of the sinners; for in Bali, the ordinary way of despatching a criminal is to stab him to the heart with a creese (kris) or crooked Malay sword.[2] In the island of Celebes, as we saw, the blood of persons who have been guilty of certain sexual crimes is believed to blast the ground on which it falls;[3] so that it is natural in their case to resort to a bloodless mode of execution such as drowning or burning. In Mamoedjoe, a district on the west coast of Celebes, the incest of a father with his daughter or of a brother with his sister is punished by binding the culprits hand and foot, weighting them with stones, and flinging them into the sea.[4] Among the Bugineese of Southern Celebes persons of princely rank who have committed this crime are placed on a raft of bamboos and set floating away out to sea.[5] In Semendo, a district of Sumatra, the punishment for incest and murder used to be to bury the criminals alive. Before they were led to their doom, it was customary for the villagers to feast them, every family killing a fowl for the purpose. Then the whole population escorted the culprits to their grave outside the village and saw the earth shovelled in upon them. In the year 1864, at the village of Tandjong Imam, this doom was executed on a man and his deceased wife's sister, with whom he had been detected in an intrigue. "Great was my emotion and indignation," said the humane Dutch governor,

Modes of execution adopted which avoid the shedding of blood.

Persons guilty of incest buried alive.

[1] G. J. van Dongen, "De Koeboes," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie*, lxiii. (1910) p. 293.

[2] R. van Eck, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, Nieuwe Serie, viii. (1879) pp. 370 *sq.*; Julius Jacobs, *Eenigen Tijd onder de Baliërs* (Batavia, 1883), p. 126.

[3] See above, pp. 52 *sq.*

[4] Hoorweg, "Nota bevattende eenige gegevens betreffende het landschap Mamoedjoe," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, lxiii. (1911) p. 95.

[5] G. A. Wilken, *Verspreide Geschriften* (The Hague, 1912), ii. 481.

"when I stood by the grave of these poor wretches along with the unworthy chiefs who had sat on the bench of justice during the enforced absence of Pangeran Anom and pronounced this sentence. I told them in plain language that judges who pronounced such a sentence of death on grounds so trivial (the request of the family concerned) deserved themselves to undergo the same punishment." The Dutch Government has since issued stringent orders that no one henceforth is to be buried alive, and has threatened with death any person who shall dare to disregard its orders.[1] The same punishment for incest is, or used to be, inflicted by the Pasemhers, another tribe of Sumatra, but more merciful than the people of Semendo they gave the culprits at least a chance for their life. The guilty pair were bound back to back and buried in a deep hole, but from the mouth of each a hollow bamboo communicated with the upper air; and if when the grave was opened after seven days the wretches were found to have survived a prolonged agony far worse than death, they were granted their life.[2] Nor was even this dreadful fate the worst that could befall the sinner who broke the rules of sexual morality in Sumatra. The Battas or Bataks of Central Sumatra condemned an adulterer to be killed and eaten; strictly speaking he should be speared to death first and eaten afterwards, but as the injured husband and his friends were commonly the judges and executioners, it sometimes happened that, passion proving too strong for a strict adherence to the letter of the law, they cut the flesh from his living body, ate it, and drank his blood, before it occurred to them to terminate his sufferings by a spear-thrust. However, an adulterer occasionally escaped with his life on the payment of a fine, always provided that his accomplice was not the wife of a chief; for in that case there was no help for it but he must be killed and eaten.[3]

Adulterers killed and eaten.

Even trivial misdemeanours or acts which we should

[1] J. S. G. Gramberg, "Schets der Kesam, Semendo, Makakauw en Blalauw," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xv. (1866) pp. 456-458. Compare G. G. Batten, *Glimpses of the Eastern Archipelago* (Singapore, 1894), pp. 105 *sq.*

[2] G. A. Wilken, *Verspreide Geschriften*, ii. 481 *sq.*

[3] Franz Junghuhn, *Die Battaländer auf Sumatra* (Berlin, 1847), ii. 147, 156 *sq.*

Extreme severity of the code of sexual morality in Lombok.

deem perfectly innocent may draw condign punishment on the thoughtless, the imprudent, the light-hearted in the Indian Archipelago. Thus we read that in the island of Lombok "the men are exceedingly jealous and very strict with their wives. A married woman may not accept a cigar or a sirih leaf from a stranger under pain of death. I was informed that some years ago one of the English traders had a Balinese woman of good family living with him—the connexion being considered quite honourable by the natives. During some festival this girl offended against the law by accepting a flower or some such trifle from another man. This was reported to the Rajah (to some of whose wives the girl was related), and he immediately sent to the Englishman's house ordering him to give the woman up as she must be 'krissed.' In vain he begged and prayed, and offered to pay any fine the Rajah might impose, and finally refused to give her up unless he was forced to do so. This the Rajah did not wish to resort to, as he no doubt thought he was acting as much for the Englishman's honour as for his own; so he appeared to let the matter drop. But some time afterwards he sent one of his followers to the house, who beckoned the girl to the door, and then saying, 'The Rajah sends you this,' stabbed her to the heart. More serious infidelity is punished still more cruelly, the woman and her paramour being tied back to back and thrown into the sea, where some large crocodiles are always on the watch to devour the bodies. One such execution took place while I was at Ampanam, but I took a long walk into the country to be out of the way till it was all over."[1]

The severity of the code based at bottom on superstition.

As the Malay peoples of the Indian Archipelago, from whom the foregoing examples are drawn, have reached a fair level of culture, it might perhaps be thought that the extreme severity with which they visit offences against their code of sexual morality springs from an excessive refinement of feeling rather than from a crude superstition; and no doubt it may well happen that extreme sensitiveness on the point of honour, of which the Malays are susceptible, contributes in many cases to sharpen the sword of justice

[1] A. R. Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, Sixth Edition (London, 1877), pp. 173 *sq.*

and add fresh force to the stroke. Yet under this delicacy of sentiment there appears to lie a deep foundation of superstition, as we may see by the extraordinary and disastrous influence which in the opinion of these people sexual crime exerts, not so much on the criminals themselves, as on the whole realm of nature, drawing down deluges of rain from the clouds till the crops rot in the fields, shaking the solid earth beneath men's feet, and blowing up into flames the slumbering fires of the volcano, till the sky is darkened at noon by a black canopy of falling ashes and illumined at night by the sullen glow of the molten lava shot forth from the subterranean furnace.[1] And however much an over-refinement of feeling may be invoked to explain the more than Puritanical severity of the Malay moral code in sexual matters, no such explanation can be applied to the like emotion of horror which similar offences excite among the savage aborigines of Australia, the lowest and the least refined probably of all the races of men about whom we possess accurate information. These rude savages also treated with rigorous severity all breaches of that widely ramified network of prohibitions in which throughout the Australian continent, before it fell under English rule, the two sexes lived immeshed. The whole community of a tribe or nation was commonly subdivided into a number of minute bodies, which we are accustomed to call classes or clans according to the principle on which they were variously constituted. No man might marry a woman of his own class or clan, and in most tribes his freedom of choice was still further limited by complex rules of marriage and descent which excluded him from seeking a wife in many more subdivisions of the tribe, and sometimes compelled him to look for her only in one out of them all. And the ordinary penalty for any violation of these rules was death. The offender was lucky who escaped with his life and a body more or less riddled with spear wounds. Thus one who knew the aborigines of Victoria well in the old days, before they were first contaminated and then destroyed by contact with European civilization, tells us that "no marriage or betrothal is permitted without the approval

A similar severity in sexual matters observed among the Australian aborigines, the lowest of existing savages.

Severe punishments inflicted for sexual offences

[1] See above, pp. 46-54.

among the aborigines of Victoria.

of the chiefs of each party, who first ascertain that no 'flesh' relationship exists, and even then their permission must be rewarded by presents. So strictly are the laws of marriage carried out, that, should any signs of affection and courtship be observed between those of 'one flesh,' the brothers, or male relatives of the woman beat her severely; the man is brought before the chief, and accused of an intention to fall into the same flesh, and is severely reprimanded by the tribe. If he persists, and runs away with the object of his affections, they beat and 'cut his head all over'; and if the woman was a consenting party she is half killed. If she dies in consequence of her punishment, her death is avenged by the man's receiving an additional beating from her relatives. No other vengeance is taken, as her punishment is legal. A child born under such conditions is taken from the parents, and handed over to the care of its grandmother, who is compelled to rear it, as no one else will adopt it. It says much for the morality of the aborigines and their laws that illegitimacy is rare, and is looked upon with such abhorrence that the mother is always severely beaten by her relatives, and sometimes put to death and burned. Her child is occasionally killed and burned with her. The father of the child is also punished with the greatest severity, and occasionally killed. Should he survive the chastisement inflicted upon him, he is always shunned by the woman's relatives, and any efforts to conciliate them with gifts are spurned, and his presents are put in the fire and burned. Since the advent of the Europeans among them, the aborigines have occasionally disregarded their admirable marriage laws, and to this disregard they attribute the greater weakness and unhealthiness of their children."[1]

Severe punishments inflicted for sexual offences in the Wakelbura tribe of Queensland.

Again, in the Wakelbura tribe of eastern Queensland the law was extremely strict as to unlawful connexions or elopements between persons too nearly related to each other. Such persons might be, for example, those whom we call cousins both on the father's and the mother's side, as well as those who belonged to a forbidden class. If such a man

[1] James Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* (Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, 1881), p. 28.

carried off a woman who had been betrothed to another, he would be pursued not only by the male relations of the woman and of her betrothed husband, but also by the men of his own tribal subdivision, whom he had outraged by his breach of the marriage law; and wherever they overtook him, he would have to fight them all. His own brothers would challenge him to fight by throwing boomerangs or other weapons at him; and if he did not accept the challenge, they would turn on the woman and cripple or kill her with their weapons, unless she could escape into the bush. Nay, the woman's own mother would cut and perhaps slay her with her own hands. Sooner or later the ravisher had to engage in single combat with the man he had injured. Both were fully armed with shield, spear, boomerang and knife. When they had exhausted their missiles, they closed on each other with their knives, a dense ring of blacks generally forming round the combatants to see fair play. In such a fight the man who had broken the tribal law always came off worst; for even if he got the better of his adversary, the other men and even his own brothers would attack him and probably gash him with their knives. Fatal stabs were sometimes given in these fights, but more usually, it would seem, the onlookers interfered and wrested the weapons from the two combatants before they proceeded to extremities. In any case the woman who had eloped was terribly mauled with knives, and if she survived the ordeal was restored to the man whom she had deserted.[1]

Severe punishment inflicted for sexual offences among the aborigines of other parts of Australia.

Among the tribes in the central parts of North-West Queensland, if a man eloped with a single woman whom he might lawfully marry, but who for any reason was forbidden to him by the tribal council, he had on returning to camp with his wife to run the gauntlet of the outraged community, who hacked his buttocks and shoulders with knives, beat his head and limbs with sticks and boomerangs, and pricked the fleshy parts of his thighs with spears, taking care, however, not to inflict fatal injuries, lest they should incur blood revenge. But if the woman with whom the man had eloped

[1] A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 222-224.

was of a class into which he might not marry, both the culprits were put to death, the relations on both sides tacitly consenting to the execution.[1] In the Yuin tribe of New South Wales, if a man eloped with a woman of his own tribal subdivision, all the men would pursue him; and if he refused to give the woman up, the sorcerer of the place would probably say to his men, "This man has done very wrong, you must kill him"; whereupon somebody would thrust a spear into him, his relatives not interfering lest the same fate should befall them.[2] The same punishment was inflicted for the same offence by the Wotjobaluk tribe of North-Western Victoria; but their western neighbours, the Mukjarawaint tribe, not content with killing the guilty man, cut off the flesh off his thighs and upper arms, roasted and ate it, his own brother partaking of the cannibal meal. As for the rest of the body, they chopped it up small and left it lying on a log. The same custom is said to have been observed by the Jupagalk tribe.[3] Among many tribes of Western Australia, as well as of other parts of that continent, persons who bear the same class-name may not marry. Any such marriage is regarded as incest and rigorously punished. For example, "the union of Boorong and Boorong is to the natives the union of brother and sister, although there may be no real blood relationship between the pair, and a union of that kind is looked upon with horror, and the perpetrators very severely punished and separated, and if the crime is repeated they are both killed."[4] On the other side of the continent the Kamilaroi of New South Wales similarly inflicted condign punishment on both the culprits who persisted in marrying each other contrary to the tribal law; the male relations of the man killed him, and the female relations of the woman killed her. The Kamilaroi of the Gwydir River went further; they

[1] Walter E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), p. 181.

[2] A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 264, 266.

[3] A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 246 *sq.*

[4] Mrs. Daisy M. Bates, "The Marriage Laws and some Customs of the West Australian Aborigines," *Victorian Geographical Journal*, xxiii.-xxiv. (1905–1906) p. 42. The statement in the text was made by a settler who had lived in the Tableland district, inland from Roeburne, for twenty years.

killed any man who so much as spoke to or held any communication with his mother-in-law,[1] for one of the most stringent laws of savage etiquette is that which prohibits any direct social intercourse between a man and his wife's mother. The law has been variously explained,[2] but a large body of evidence points to the conclusion that this custom of mutual avoidance is simply a precaution to prevent improper relations between the two. Hence a brief consideration of it is appropriate in this place; for to all appearance the custom, though it may be wholesome and beneficial in practice, has originated purely in superstition. But before giving my reasons for thinking so it may be well, for the sake of those who are unfamiliar with savage etiquette, to illustrate the practice itself by a few examples.[3]

Penalty of death inflicted for the crime of speaking to a mother-in-law.

Speaking of the Boloki, a Bantu tribe of the Upper Congo, an experienced missionary, the Rev. John H. Weeks, writes as follows: "Perhaps this will be the best place in which to make a few remarks on the mother-in-law. She and her son-in-law may never look on each other's face. I have often heard a man say, 'So-and-so, your mother-in-law is coming,' and the person addressed would run into my house and hide himself until his wife's mother had gone by. They can sit at a little distance from each other, with their backs to one another, and talk over affairs when necessary. *Bokilo* means mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, father-in-law, sister of mother-in-law, brother of father-in-law, wife of wife's brother, and in fact any relation-in-law. *Bokilo*, the noun, is derived from *kila* = to forbid, prohibit, taboo, and indicates that all bearing the relationship of

The custom of avoiding a mother-in-law and other relations by marriage among the Boloki of the Congo.

[1] A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, p. 208. Similarly among tribes on the Hunter River "a man is not permitted to speak to his wife's mother, but can do so through a third party. In former days it was death to speak to her, but now a man doing so is only severely reprimanded and has to leave the camp for a certain time" (A. W. Howitt, *op. cit.* p. 267).

[2] See for example (Sir) E. B. Tylor, "On a method of investigating the Development of Institutions," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xviii. (1889) pp. 246-248; Salomon Reinach, "Le Gendre et la Belle-Mère," *L'Anthropologie*, xxii. (1911) pp. 649-662; *id.*, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, iv. (Paris, 1912) pp. 130-147.

[3] In *Totemism and Exogamy* (Index, *s.vv.* "Avoidance" and "Mother-in-law") will be found a collection of examples. In what follows I abstain for the most part from citing instances which have been adduced by me before.

bokilo can have no intimate relationship with one another, for it is regarded as incestuous; and it is according to native ideas just as wrong for a daughter-in-law to speak or look at her husband's father, as for the son-in-law to speak or look at his wife's mother. Some have told me that this was to guard against all possibility of cohabitation, 'For a person you never look at you never desire.' Others have said, 'Well, don't you see, my wife came from her womb.' I am strongly inclined to the opinion that the former is the real reason." [1]

From this statement it appears that a man and his wife's mother are not the only persons who are bound to avoid each other in society; the same rule of social avoidance is incumbent on a man and his son's wife, and on many other persons of opposite sex who are connected with each other by marriage; and in regard to all such persons it is held that any intimate relationship between them would be incestuous. Hence we see, what is important to bear in mind, that the rule of social avoidance incumbent on a man and his wife's mother is by no means solitary of its kind, and cannot be considered apart from a large number of similar rules of avoidance observed between other persons. The same large extension of the rule appears in the customs of the Batamba, a Bantu tribe of Busoga, a country on the north side of the Lake Victoria Nyanza. A Catholic missionary, who has laboured among the Batamba for nine years, describes their practice in this matter as follows:—

The custom of avoiding relations by marriage among the Batamba of Busoga.

"There is a very strange custom which may be considered here. If a son marries or if a daughter does the same, then if they are grown up, from the day the son or daughter marries, the mother, father of both parties, the brothers and sisters of both parties are not allowed to sleep under the same roof. If a man marries, then he builds a house for himself, and should his parents live with him, or his brothers and sisters, then they must have a separate house near by. They are not forbidden to go in and visit him or her, but are not allowed to sleep there. The reason is this. They say that otherwise sickness is caused, and this

[1] Rev. John H. Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals* (London, 1913), pp. 133 *sq.* Compare *id.*, "Anthropological Notes on the Bangala of the Upper Congo," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) pp. 367 *sq.*

is called *endivade ya buko*, the sickness of relationship, literally taken. The sickness is called *bujugumiro*, trembling, from the verb *kujugumira*, to shiver or tremble. This cannot be got out of their heads, and no amount of talking or arguing will convince them of the opposite. I have attended many cases of this disease and I have not known one to recover.

"Again, the father and mother of the bride and bridegroom, the aunts and uncles of bride and bridegroom may no more shake hands or touch in any way the bride and bridegroom, or else the same disease, *bujugumiro*, will follow. Of course much less will they commit themselves between each other for the fear of the same reason. And it is never heard of that a brother and sister, aunt and nephew, niece and uncle have ever committed themselves seriously. They are so afraid of the disease they say will follow, that, as a man here over seventy years of age tells me, he has never in his whole life heard of such a misbehaviour. The people say, '*Jekiyinzika* = it is impossible for such a thing to happen.' And no doubt one is struck with the care they take. The disease following does not come as a punishment from the gods, but they say, '*Endwada ejja yokka*, the illness comes by itself.'"[1]

Avoidance of blood relations as well as of connexions by marriage.

From the foregoing account it appears that among the Batamba the rules of social avoidance are observed between blood-relations of opposite sexes, such as brothers and sisters, uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews, as well as between connexions by marriage. This is a further extension of the rule of social avoidance which it is important to bear in mind. We shall recur to it presently. For our present purpose it deserves also to be noticed that breaches of the custom are believed to be punished by a disease of trembling or shivering, which, though it probably springs purely from the imagination of the culprits, nevertheless appears to be always fatal. Further, we learn that the mere apprehension of this disease acts as a most efficient check upon improper relations between persons who are connected with each other by blood or marriage.

Among the Akamba, a Bantu tribe of British East Africa,

[1] Father M. A. Condon, "Contribution to the Ethnography of the Basoga-Batamba, Uganda Protectorate," *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) pp. 377 *sq.*

The custom of avoiding mother-in-law and own daughter among the Akamba of British East Africa.

"if a man meets his mother-in-law in the road they both hide their faces and pass by in the bush on opposite sides of the path. If a man did not observe this custom and at any time wanted to marry another wife, it would prove a serious stigma, and parents would have nothing to do with him. Moreover, if a wife heard that her husband had stopped and spoken to her mother in the road, she would leave him. If a man has business he wishes to discuss with his mother-in-law, he goes to her hut at night, and she will talk to him from behind the partition in the hut. . . . If a girl of the age of puberty meets her father in the road, she hides as he passes, nor can she ever go and sit near him in the village until the day comes when he tells her that it has been arranged for her to marry a certain man. After marriage she does not avoid her father in any way."[1] Thus among the Akamba a man must avoid his own marriageable, but unmarried, daughter exactly as he avoids his wife's mother; but the custom of avoidance ceases when his daughter marries. This extension of the rule to a man's own daughter, and its limitation to the time during which the girl is nubile but single, are most significant, and point plainly to a fear of improper relations between father and daughter. To that point we shall return shortly.

The custom of avoiding parents-in-law among various tribes of Central and East Africa.

Among the Bakerewe, a Bantu people inhabiting a large and fertile island in Lake Victoria Nyanza, "the wife, whether the first (*omukuru*) or the last (*omwenga*), must always belong to a family other than that of the husband, for marriages are not contracted between relations. Never in any case will the new household establish itself in the immediate neighbourhood of the wife's parents. The reason is that the son-in-law (*omukwerima*) and his mother-in-law (*mazara*), according to their customs, may not see each other nor look upon each other; hence in order not to run the risk of breaking a rule to which everybody attaches grave importance, they go as far away as possible."[2] Among some tribes of Eastern Africa which formerly acknowledged the suzerainty of the sultan of Zanzibar, before a young couple had children

[1] C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 103, 104.

[2] Father Eugene Hurel, "Religion et vie domestique des Bakerewe," *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) p. 287.

they might meet neither their father-in-law nor their mother-in-law. To avoid them they must make a long roundabout. But if they could not do that, they must throw themselves on the ground and hide their faces till the father-in-law or mother-in-law had passed by.[1]

The custom of avoiding parents-in-law among the tribes of British Central Africa and Northern Rhodesia.

Among the Anyanja, a Bantu people of British Central Africa, "a man used never to speak to his mother-in-law till after the birth of his first son. Neither a man nor his wife will eat in company of their mother or father-in-law until after birth of a child. If a man sees his mother-in-law eat, he has insulted her and is expected to pay damages. If a man meets his mother-in-law coming along the road and does not recognise her, she will fall down on the ground as a sign, when he will run away. In the same way a father-in-law will signal to his daughter-in-law; the whole idea being that they are unworthy to be noticed till they have proved that they can beget children."[2] However, if a wife should prove barren for three years, the rules of avoidance between the young couple and their parents-in-law cease to be observed.[3] Hence the custom of avoidance among these people is associated in some way with the wife's fertility. So among the Awemba, a Bantu tribe of Northern Rhodesia, "if a young man sees his mother-in-law coming along the path, he must retreat into the bush and make way for her, or if she suddenly comes upon him he must keep his eyes fixed on the ground, and only after a child is born may they converse together."[4] Among the Angoni, another Bantu tribe of British Central Africa, it would be a gross breach of etiquette if a man were to enter his son-in-law's house; he may come within ten paces of the door, but no nearer. A woman may not even approach her son-in-law's house, and she is never allowed to speak to him. Should they meet accidentally on a path, the son-in-law gives way and makes a circuit to avoid encountering his mother-in-law face to face.[5] Here then we

[1] Father Picarda, "Autour du Mandera, Notes sur l'Ouzigoua, l'Oukwéré et l'Oudoé (Zanquebar)," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xviii. (1886) p. 286.

[2] H. S. Stannus, "Notes on Some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 307.

[3] H. S. Stannus, *op. cit.* p. 309.

[4] Cullen Gouldsbury and Hubert Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), p. 259.

[5] "The Angoni-Zulus," *British Central Africa Gazette*, No. 86, April 30th, 1898, p. 2.

see that a man avoids his son-in-law as well as his mother-in-law, though not so strictly.

The custom of avoiding mother-in-law and wife of wife's brother among the Thonga of Delagoa Bay.

Among the Thonga, a Bantu tribe about Delagoa Bay, when a man meets his mother-in-law or her sister on the road, he steps out of the road into the forest on the right hand side and sits down. She does the same. Then they salute each other in the usual way by clapping their hands. After that they may talk to each other. When a man is in a hut, his mother-in-law dare not enter it, but must sit down outside without seeing him. So seated she may salute him, "Good morning, son of So-and-so." But she would not dare to pronounce his name. However, when a man has been married many years, his mother-in-law has less fear of him, and will even enter the hut where he is and speak to him. But among the Thonga the woman whom a man is bound by custom to avoid most rigidly is not his wife's mother, but the wife of his wife's brother. If the two meet on a path, they carefully avoid each other; he will step out of the way and she will hurry on, while her companions, if she has any, will stop and chat with him. She will not enter the same boat with him, if she can help it, to cross a river. She will not eat out of the same dish. If he speaks to her, it is with constraint and embarrassment. He will not enter her hut, but will crouch at the door and address her in a voice trembling with emotion. Should there be no one else to bring him food, she will do it reluctantly, watching his hut and putting the food inside the door when he is absent. It is not that they dislike each other, but that they feel a mutual, a mysterious fear.[1] However, among the Thonga, the rules of avoidance between connexions by marriage decrease in severity as time passes. The strained relations between a man and his wife's mother in particular become easier. He begins to call her "Mother" and she calls him "Son." This change even goes so far that in some cases the man may go and dwell in the village of his wife's parents, especially if he has children and the children are grown up.[2] Again, among the Ovambo, a Bantu

[1] Henri A. Junod, *Les Ba-Ronga* (Neuchâtel, 1898), pp. 79 *sq.*; *id.*, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchatel, 1912–1913), i. 230-232.

[2] Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, i. 239.

people of German South-West Africa, a man may not look at his future mother-in-law while he talks with her, but is bound to keep his eyes steadily fixed on the ground. In some cases the avoidance is even more stringent; if the two meet unexpectedly, they separate at once. But after the marriage has been celebrated, the social intercourse between mother-in-law and son-in-law becomes easier on both sides.[1]

The custom of avoiding the mother-in-law among other than Bantu tribes of Africa.

Thus far our examples of ceremonial avoidance between mother-in-law and son-in-law have been drawn from Bantu tribes. But in Africa the custom, though apparently most prevalent and most strongly marked among peoples of the great Bantu stock, is not confined to them. Among the Masai of British East Africa, "mothers-in-law and their sons-in-law must avoid one another as much as possible; and if a son-in-law enters his mother-in-law's hut she must retire into the inner compartment and sit on the bed, whilst he remains in the outer compartment; they may then talk. Own brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law must also avoid one another, though this rule does not apply to half-brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law."[2] So, too, among the Bogos, a tribe on the outskirts of Abyssinia, a man never sees the face of his mother-in-law and never pronounces her name; the two take care not to meet.[3] Among the Donaglas a husband after marriage "lives in his wife's house for a year, without being allowed to see his mother-in-law, with whom he enters into relations only on the birth of his first son."[4] In Darfur, when a youth has been betrothed to a girl, however intimate he may have been with her parents before, he ceases to see them until the ceremony has taken place, and even avoids them in the street. They, on their part, hide their faces, if they happen to meet him unexpectedly.[5]

[1] Hermann Tönjes, *Ovamboland, Land, Leute, Mission* (Berlin, 1911), p. 133.

[2] A. C. Hollis, "A Note on the Masai System of Relationship and other Matters connected therewith," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 481.

[3] Werner Munzinger, *Sitten und Recht der Bogos* (Winterthur, 1859), p. 63.

[4] G. Casati, *Ten Years in Equatoria* (London and New York, 1891), i. 69.

[5] *Travels of an Arab Merchant [Mohammed Ibn Omar El-Tounsy] in Soudan*, abridged from the French by Bayle St. John (London, 1854), pp. 97 *sq*.

The custom of avoiding relations by marriage in Sumatra and New Guinea.

To pass now from Africa to other parts of the world, among the Looboos, a primitive tribe in the tropical forests of Sumatra, custom forbids a woman to be in her father-in-law's company and a man to be in his mother-in-law's society. For example, if a man meets his daughter-in-law, he should cross over to the other side of the road to let her pass as far as possible from him; but if the way is too narrow, he takes care in time to get out of it. But no such reserve is prescribed between a father-in-law and his son-in-law, or between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law.[1] Among the Bukaua, a Melanesian tribe of German New Guinea, the rules of avoidance between persons connected by marriage are very stringent; they may not touch each other or mention each other's names. But contrary to the usual practice the avoidance seems to be quite as strict between persons of the same sex as between males and females. At least the writer who reports the custom illustrates it chiefly by the etiquette which is observed between a man and his daughter's husband. When a man eats in presence of his son-in-law, he veils his face; but if nevertheless his son-in-law should see his open mouth, the father-in-law is so ashamed that he runs away into the wood. If he gives his son-in-law anything, such as betel or tobacco, he will never put it in his hand, but pours it on a leaf, and the son-in-law fetches it away. If father-in-law and son-in-law both take part in a wild boar hunt, the son-in-law will abstain from seizing or binding the boar, lest he should chance to touch his father-in-law. If, however, through any accident their hands or backs should come into contact, the father-in-law is extremely horrified, and a dog must be at once killed, which he gives to his son-in-law for the purpose of wiping out the stain on his honour. If the two should ever fall out about anything, the son-in-law will leave the village and his wife, and will stay away in some other place till his father-in-law, for his daughter's sake, calls him back. A man in like manner will never touch his sister-in-law.[2]

[1] J. Kreemer, "De Loeboes in Mandailing," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, lxvi. (1912) p. 324.

[2] Stefan Lehner, "Bukaua," in R. Neuhauss's *Deutsch Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, 1911), iii. 426 *sq.*

The custom of avoiding relations by marriage among the Indian tribes of America.

Among the low savages of the Californian peninsula a man was not allowed for some time to look into the face of his mother-in-law or of his wife's other near relations; when these women were present he had to step aside or hide himself.[1] Among the Indians of the Isla del Malhado in Florida a father-in-law and mother-in-law might not enter the house of their son-in-law, and he on his side might not appear before his father-in-law and his relations. If they met by accident they had to go apart to the distance of a bowshot, holding their heads down and their eyes turned to the earth. But a woman was free to converse with the father and mother of her husband.[2] Among the Indians of Yucatan, if a betrothed man saw his future father-in-law or mother-in-law at a distance, he turned away as quickly as possible, believing that a meeting with them would prevent him from begetting children.[3] Among the Arawaks of British Guiana a man may never see the face of his wife's mother. If she is in the house with him, they must be separated by a screen or partition-wall; if she travels with him in a canoe, she steps in first, in order that she may turn her back to him.[4] Among the Caribs "the women never quit their father's house, and in that they have an advantage over their husbands in as much as they may talk to all sorts of people, whereas the husband dare not converse with his wife's relations, unless he is dispensed from this observance either by their tender age or by their intoxication. They shun meeting them and make great circuits for that purpose. If they are surprised in a place where they cannot help meeting, the person addressed turns his face another way so as not to be obliged to see the person, whose voice he is compelled to hear."[5]

[1] J. Baegert, "An Account of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Californian Peninsula," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for the year 1863*, p. 368. This and the following American cases have already been cited by me in *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 314 *sq.*

[2] Alvar Nuñez Cabeça de Vaca, *Relation et Naufrages* (Paris, 1837), pp. 109 *sq.* (in Ternaux-Compans' *Voyages, Relations, et Mémoires originaux pour servir à l'Histoire de la Découverte de l'Amérique*). The original of this work was published in Spanish at Valladolid in 1555.

[3] Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale* (Paris, 1857–1859), ii. 52 *sq.*

[4] G. Klemm, *Allgemeine Culturgeschichte der Menschheit* (Leipsic, 1843–1852), ii. 77.

[5] J. B. du Tertre, *Histoire generale des Isles de S. Christophe, de la Guadeloupe, de la Martinique et autres dans*

Among the Araucanian Indians of Chili a man's mother-in-law refuses to speak to or even to look at him during the marriage festivity, and "the point of honour is, in some instances, carried so far, that for years after the marriage the mother never addresses her son-in-law face to face; though with her back turned, or with the interposition of a fence or a partition, she will converse with him freely."[1]

The custom of avoiding relations by marriage cannot be separated from the similar custom of avoiding relations by blood; both are propably precautions to prevent improper relations between the sexes.

It would be easy to multiply examples of similar customs of avoidance between persons closely connected by marriage, but the foregoing may serve as specimens. Now in order to determine the meaning of such customs it is very important to observe that similar customs of avoidance are practised in some tribes not merely between persons connected with each other by marriage, but also between the nearest blood relations of different sexes, namely, between parents and children and between brothers and sisters;[2] and the customs are so alike that it seems difficult or impossible to separate them and to offer one explanation of the avoidance of connexions by marriage and another different explanation of the avoidance of blood relations. Yet this is what is done by some who attempt to explain the customs of avoidance; or rather they confine their attention wholly to connexions by marriage, or even to mothers-in-law alone, while they completely ignore blood relations, although in point of fact it is the avoidance of blood relations which seems to furnish the key to the problem of such avoidances in general. The true explanation of all such customs of avoidance appears to be, as I have already indicated, that they are precautions designed to remove the temptation to sexual intercourse between persons whose marriage union is for any reason repugnant to the moral sense of the community. This explanation, while it has been rejected by theorists at home,

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l'Amerique (Paris, 1654), p. 419. A similar, but rather briefer, account of the custom is given by De la Borde, who may have borrowed from Du Tertre. See De la Borde, "Relation de l'origine, mœurs, coustumes, réligion, guerres et voyages des Caraibes, sauvages des Isles Antilles de l'Amerique," p. 56 (in *Recueil de divers Voyages faits en Afrique et en l'Amerique qui n'ont pas esté encore publiez*, Paris, 1684).

[1] Edmond Reuel Smith, *The Araucanians* (London, 1855), p. 217.

[2] We have met with a custom of avoidance between father and daughter among the Akamba (above, p. 78). For more examples see *Totemism and Exogamy*, Index, *s.v.* "Avoidance," vol. iv. p. 326.

has been adopted by some of the best observers of savage life, whose opinion is entitled to carry the greatest weight.[1]

Mutual avoidance of mother and son, of father and daughter, and of brother and sister among the Battas.

That a fear of improper intimacy even between the nearest blood relations is not baseless among races of a lower culture seems proved by the testimony of a Dutch missionary in regard to the Battas or Bataks of Sumatra, a people who have attained to a fairly high degree of barbaric civilization. The Battas "observe certain rules of avoidance in regard to near relations by blood or marriage; and we are informed that such avoidance springs not from the strictness but from the looseness of their moral practice. A Batta, it is said, assumes that a solitary meeting of a man with a woman leads to an improper intimacy between them. But at the same time he believes that incest or the sexual intercourse of near relations excites the anger of the gods and entails calamities of all sorts. Hence near relations are obliged to avoid each other lest they should succumb to temptation. A Batta, for example, would think it shocking were a brother to escort his sister to an evening party. Even in the presence of others a Batta brother and sister feel embarrassed. If one of them comes into the house, the other will go away. Further, a man may never be alone in the house with his daughter, nor a mother with her son. A man may never speak to his mother-in-law nor a woman to her father-in-law. The Dutch missionary who reports these customs adds that he is sorry to say that from what he knows of the Battas he believes the maintenance of most of these rules to be very necessary. For the same reason, he tells us, as soon as Batta lads have reached the age of puberty they are no longer allowed to sleep in the family house but are sent away to pass the night in a separate building (*djambon*); and similarly as soon as a man loses his wife by death he is excluded from the house." [2]

[1] Among those who incline more or less definitely to accept this view are the late Dr. A. W. Howitt ("Notes on some Australian Class Systems," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xii. (1883) pp. 502 *sq.*), Dr. R. H. Codrington (see below, p. 86), M. Joustra (see below, p. 85), and the Rev. J. H. Weeks (see above, p. 76). Three of these writers are experienced missionaries who are only concerned to record the facts, and have no theories to maintain.

[2] *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. 188 *sq.* The authority for these statements is M. Joustra, "Het leven, de zeden en gewoonten der Bataks," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlvi. (1902) pp. 391 *sq.*

Mutual avoidance of mother and son and of brother and sister among the Melanesians.

In like manner among the Melanesians of the Banks' Islands and the New Hebrides a man must not only avoid his mother-in-law; from the time when he reaches or approaches puberty and has begun to wear clothes instead of running about naked, he must avoid his mother and sisters, and he may no longer live in the same house with them; he takes up his quarters in the clubhouse of the unmarried males, where he now regularly eats and sleeps. He may go to his father's house to ask for food, but if his sister is within he must go away before he eats; if she is not there, he may sit down near the door and eat. If by chance brother and sister meet in the path, she runs away or hides. If a boy, walking on the sands, perceives footprints which he knows to be those of his sister, he will not follow them, nor will she follow his. This mutual avoidance lasts through life. Not only must he avoid the persons of his sisters, but he may not pronounce their names or even use a common word which happens to form part of any one of their names. In like manner his sisters eschew the use of his name and of all words which form part of it. Strict, too, is a boy's reserve towards his mother from the time when he begins to wear clothes, and the reserve increases as he grows to manhood. It is greater on her side than on his. He may go to the house and ask for food and his mother may bring it out for him, but she will not give it to him; she puts it down for him to take. If she calls to him to come, she speaks to him in the plural, in a more distant manner; "Come ye," she says, not "Come thou." If they talk together she sits at a little distance and turns away, for she is shy of her grown-up son. "The meaning of all this," as Dr. Codrington observes, "is obvious."[1] When a Melanesian man of the Banks' Islands marries, he is bound in like manner to avoid his mother-in-law. "The rules of avoidance are very strict and minute. As regards the avoidance of the person, a man will not come near his wife's mother; the avoidance is mutual; if the two chance to meet in a path, the woman will step out of it and stand with her back turned till he has gone by, or perhaps if it be more

Mutual avoidance of a man and his mother-in-law among the Melanesians.

[1] R. H. Codrington, D.D., *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 232.

convenient he will move out of the way. At Vanua Lava, in Port Patteson, a man would not follow his mother-in-law along the beach, nor she him, until the tide had washed out the footsteps of the first traveller from the sand. At the same time a man and his mother-in-law will talk at a distance."[1]

It is significant that mutual avoidance between blood relations of opposite sexes begins at or near puberty.

It seems obvious that these Melanesian customs of avoidance are the same, and must be explained in the same way whether the woman whom a man shuns is his wife's mother or his own mother or his sister. Now it is highly significant that just as among the Akamba of East Africa the mutual avoidance of father and daughter only begins when the girl has reached puberty, so among the Melanesians the mutual avoidance of a boy on the one side and of his mother and sisters on the other only begins when the boy has reached or approached puberty. Thus in both peoples the avoidance between the nearest blood relations only commences at the dangerous age when sexual connexion on both sides begins to be possible. It seems difficult, therefore, to evade the conclusion that the mutual avoidance is adopted for no other reason than to diminish as far as possible the chances of sexual unions which public opinion condemns as incestuous. But if that is the reason why a young Melanesian boy, on the verge of puberty, avoids his own mother and sisters, it is natural and almost necessary to infer that it is the same reason which leads him, as a full-grown and married man, to eschew the company of his wife's mother.

Mutual avoidance of mother and son, of father and daughter, and of brother and sister in the Caroline Islands.

Similar customs of avoidance between mothers and sons, between fathers and daughters, and between brothers and sisters are observed by the natives of the Caroline Islands, and the writer who records them assigns the fear of incest as the motive for their observance. "The prohibition of marriage," he says, "and of sexual intercourse between kinsfolk of the same tribe is regarded by the Central Caroline natives as a divine ordinance; its breach is therefore, in their opinion, punished by the higher powers with sickness or death. The law influences in a characteristic way the whole social life of the islanders, for efforts

[1] R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.* p. 43.

are made to keep members of families of different sexes apart from each other even in their youth. Unmarried men and boys, from the time when they begin to speak, may therefore not remain by night in the huts, but must sleep in the *fel*, the assembly-house. In the evening their meal (*åkot*) is brought thither to them by their mothers or sisters. Only when a son is sick may his mother receive him in the hut and tend him there. On the other hand entrance to the assembly-house (*fel*) is forbidden to women and girls except on the occasion of the *pwarik* festival; whereas female members of other tribes are free to visit it, although, so far as I could observe, they seldom make use of the permission. Unmarried girls sleep in the huts with their parents.

"These restrictions, which custom and tradition have instituted within the family, find expression also in the behaviour of the members of families toward each other. The following persons, namely, have to be treated with respect—the daughters by their father, the sons by their mother, the brothers by their sisters. In presence of such relations, as in the presence of a chief, you may not stand, but must sit down; if you are obliged on narrow paths to pass by one of them you must first obtain permission and then do it in a stooping or creeping posture. You allow them everywhere to go in front; you also avoid to drink out of the vessel which they have just used; you do not touch them, but keep always at a certain distance from them; the head especially is deemed sacred." [1]

Mutual avoidance of male and female cousins in some tribes.

In all these cases the custom of mutual avoidance is observed by persons of opposite sex who, though physically capable of sexual union, are forbidden by tradition and public opinion to have any such commerce with each other. Thus far the blood relations whom a man is forbidden to marry and compelled to avoid, are his own mother, his own daughter, and his own sisters. But to this list some people add a man's female cousins or at least certain of them; for many races draw a sharp line of distinction between cousins according

[1] Max Girschner, "Die Karolineninsel Námōluk und ihre Bewohner," *Baessler-Archiv*, ii. (1912) p. 164.

as they are children of two brothers or of two sisters or of a brother and a sister, and while they permit or even prefer marriage with certain cousins, they absolutely forbid marriage with certain others. Now, it is highly significant that some tribes which forbid a man to marry certain of his cousins also compel him to adopt towards them the same attitude of social reserve which in the same or other tribes a man is obliged to observe towards his wife's mother, his own mother, and his own sisters, all of whom in like manner he is forbidden to marry. Thus among the tribes in the central part of New Ireland (New Mecklenburg) a male and a female cousin, the children of a brother and a sister respectively, are most strictly forbidden by custom to marry each other; indeed this prohibition is described as the most stringent of all; the usual saying in regard to such relations is, "The cousin is holy" (*i tábu ra kókup*). Now, in these tribes a man is not merely forbidden to marry his female cousin, the daughter of his father's sister or of his mother's brother; he must also avoid her socially, just as in other tribes a man must avoid his wife's mother, his own mother, his own daughter, and his own sisters. The cousins may not approach each other, they may not shake hands or even touch each other, they may not give each other presents, they may not mention each other's names; but they are allowed to speak to each other at a distance of some paces. These rules of avoidance, these social barriers erected between cousins, the children of a brother and a sister respectively, are interpreted most naturally and simply as precautions intended to obviate the danger of a criminal intercourse between persons whose sexual union would be regarded by public opinion with deep displeasure. Indeed the Catholic missionary, to whom we are indebted for the information, assumes this interpretation of the rules as if it were too obvious to call for serious discussion. He says that all the customs of avoidance "are observed as outward symbols of this prohibition of marriage"; and he adds that "were the outward sign of the prohibition of marriage, to which the natives cleave with genuine obstinacy, abolished or even weakened, there would be an immediate danger of the natives contracting such

Mutual avoidance of male and female cousins in New Ireland.

marriages."[1] It seems difficult for a rational man to draw any other inference. If any confirmation were needed, it would be furnished by the fact that among these tribes of New Ireland brothers and sisters are obliged to observe precisely the same rules of mutual avoidance, and that incest between brother and sister is a crime which is punished with hanging; they may not come near each other, they may not shake hands, they may not touch each other, they may not give each other presents; but they are allowed to speak to each other at a distance of some paces. And the penalty for incest with a daughter is also death by hanging.[2]

Mutual avoidance of certain male and female cousins among the Baganda; marriage or sexual intercourse forbidden between these cousins under pain of death.

Amongst the Baganda of Central Africa in like manner a man was forbidden under pain of death to marry or have sexual intercourse with his cousin, the daughter either of his father's sister or of his mother's brother; and such cousins might not approach each other, nor hand each other anything, nor enter the same house, nor eat out of the same dish. Were cousins to break these rules of social avoidance, in other words, if they were to approach each other or hand each other anything, it was believed that they would fall ill, that their hands would tremble, and that they would be unfit for any work.[3] Here, again, the prohibition of social intercourse was in all probability merely a precaution against sexual intercourse, for which the penalty was death. And the same may be said of the similar custom of avoidance which among these same Baganda a man had to observe towards his wife's mother. "No man might see his mother-in-law, or speak face to face with her; she covered her face, if she passed her son-in-law, and he gave her the path and made a detour, if he saw her coming. If she was in the house, he might not enter, but he was allowed to speak to her from a distance. This was said to be because he had seen her daughter's nakedness. If a son-in-law accidentally

[1] P. G. Peckel, "Die Verwandtschaftsnamen des mittleren Neumecklenburg," *Anthropos*, iii. (1908) pp. 467, 470 *sq*.

[2] P. G. Peckel, *op. cit.* pp. 463, 467.

[3] Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 128 *sq*., 131; Sir Harry Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1904), ii. 695. The latter writer says generally: "Cousins cannot enter the same house, and must not eat out of the same dish. A man cannot marry his cousin." But from Mr. Roscoe's researches it appears that a man has only to avoid certain cousins, called *kizibhwewe*, that is, the daughters either of his father's sisters or of his mother's brothers.

saw his mother-in-law's breasts, he sent her a barkcloth in compensation, to cover herself, lest some illness, such as tremor, should come upon him. The punishment for incest was death; no member of a clan would shield a person guilty thereof; the offender was disowned by the clan, tried by the chief of the district, and put to death."[1]

Marriage between certain cousins forbidden among some South African tribes but allowed among others.

The prohibition of marriage with certain cousins appears to be widespread among African peoples of the Bantu stock. Thus in regard to the Bantus of South Africa we read that "every man of a coast tribe regarded himself as the protector of those females whom we would call his cousins, second cousins, third cousins, and so forth, on the father's side, while some had a similar feeling towards the same relatives on the mother's side as well, and classified them all as sisters. Immorality with one of them would have been considered incestuous, something horrible, something unutterably disgraceful. Of old it was punished by the death of the male, and even now a heavy fine is inflicted upon him, while the guilt of the female must be atoned by a sacrifice performed with due ceremony by the tribal priest, or it is believed a curse will rest upon her and her issue. . . . In contrast to this prohibition the native of the interior almost as a rule married the daughter of his father's brother, in order, as he said, to keep property from being lost to his family. This custom more than anything else created a disgust and contempt for them by the people of the coast, who term such intermarriages the union of dogs, and attribute to them the insanity and idiocy which in recent times has become prevalent among the inland tribes."[2]

[1] Rev. J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* p. 129. Among the women with whom man was forbidden to have sexual relations under pain of death were (besides his cousins mentioned above) his father's sister, his daughter, and his wife's sister's daughter. See J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* pp. 131, 132. The reason alleged for avoiding a mother-in-law, namely, because a man has seen her daughter's nakedness (compare above, p. 76) is probably a later misinterpretation of the custom.

[2] G. McCall Theal, *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, vii. (1901) pp. 431, 432. The writer adds: "Among the tribes within the Cape Colony at the present time the differences are as follows:—

"Xosas, Tembus, and Pondos: marry no relative by blood, however distant, on either father's or mother's side.

"Hlubis and others commonly called Fingos: may marry the daughter of mother's brother and other relatives on that side, but not on father's side.

"Basuto, Batlaro, Batlapin, and Barolong: very frequently marry cousins on father's side, and know of no restrictions beyond actual sisters."

Marriage between cousins allowed in some African tribes on condition that an expiatory sacrifice is offered.

Among the Thonga, a Bantu tribe about Delagoa Bay, marriages between cousins are as a rule prohibited, and it is believed that such unions are unfruitful. However, custom permits cousins to marry each other on condition that they perform an expiatory ceremony which is supposed to avert the curse of barrenness from the wife. A goat is sacrificed, and the couple are anointed with the green liquid extracted from the half-digested grass in the animal's stomach. Then a hole is cut in the goat's skin and through this hole the heads of the cousins are inserted. The goat's liver is then handed to them, quite raw, through the hole in the skin, and they must tear it out with their teeth without using a knife. Having torn it out, they eat it. The word for liver (*shibindji*) also means "patience," "determination." So they say to the couple, "You have acted with strong determination. Eat the liver now! Eat it in the full light of the day, not in the dark! It will be an offering to the gods." Then the family priest prays, saying: "You, our gods, So-and-so, look! We have done it in the daylight. It has not been done by stealth. Bless them, give them children!" When he has done praying, the assistants take all the half-digested grass from the goat's stomach and place it on the wife's head, saying, "Go and bear children!"[1] Among the Wagogo of German East Africa marriage is forbidden between cousins who are the children of two brothers or of two sisters, but is permitted between cousins who are the children of a brother and sister respectively. However, in this case it is usual for the wife's father to kill a sheep and put on a leather armlet, made presumably from the sheep's skin; otherwise it is supposed that the marriage would be unfruitful.[2] Thus the Wagogo, like the Thonga, imagine that the marriage of cousins is doomed to infertility unless an expiatory sacrifice is offered and a peculiar use made of the victim's skin. Again, the Akikuyu of British East Africa forbid the marriage of cousins and second cousins, the children and grandchildren of brothers and sisters. If such persons

[1] Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchatel, 1912–1913), i. 243-245. As to the rules concerning the marriage of cousins in this tribe, see *id.* i. 241 *sq.*

[2] Heinrich Claus, *Die Wagogo* (Leipsic and Berlin, 1911), p. 58.

married, they would commit a grave sin, and all their children would surely die; for the curse or ceremonial pollution (*thahu*) incurred by such a crime cannot be purged away. Nevertheless it sometimes happens that a man unwittingly marries a first or second cousin; for instance, if a part of the family moves away to another district, it may come about that a man makes the acquaintance of a girl and marries her before he discovers the relationship. In such a case, where the sin has been committed unknowingly, the curse can be averted by the performance of an expiatory rite. The elders take a sheep and place it on the woman's shoulders; there it is killed and the intestines taken out. Then the elders solemnly sever the intestines with a sharp splinter of wood taken from a bush of a certain sort (*mukeo*), "and they announce that they are cutting the clan *kutinyarurira*, by which they mean that they are severing the bond of relationship which exists between the pair. A medicine man then comes and purifies the couple."[1] In all these cases we may assume with a fair degree of probability that the old prohibition of marriage between cousins is breaking down, and that the expiatory sacrifice offered when such a marriage does take place is merely a salve to the uneasy conscience of those who commit or connive at a breach of the ancient taboo.

The mutual avoidance of male and female cousins is probably a precaution against a criminal intimacy between them.

Thus the prohibition of marriage between cousins, and the rules of ceremonial avoidance observed in some tribes between persons who stand in that relationship to each other, appear both to spring from a belief, right or wrong, in the injurious effects of such unions and from a desire to avoid them. The mutual avoidance of the cousins is merely a precaution to prevent a closer and more criminal intimacy between them. If that is so, it furnishes a confirmation of the view that all the customs of ceremonial avoidance between blood relations or connexions by marriage of opposite sexes are based simply on a fear of incest.

The theory is perhaps confirmed by the observation that in some tribes the avoidance between a man and his

[1] C. W. Hobley, "Kikuyu Customs and Beliefs," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 438.

The mutual avoidance between a man and his wife's relations seems to be partly grounded on a fear of rendering the wife infertile.

wife's mother lasts only until he has had a child by his wife;[1] while in others, though avoidance continues longer, it gradually wears away with time as the man and woman advance in years,[2] and in others, again, it is observed only between a man and his future mother-in-law, and comes to an end with his marriage.[3] These customs suggest that in the minds of the people who practise them there is a close connexion between the avoidance of the wife's relations and the dread of an infertile marriage. The Indians of Yucatan, as we saw, believe that if a betrothed man were to meet his future mother-in-law or father-in-law, he would thereby lose the power of begetting children. Such a fear seems to be only an extension by false analogy of that belief in the disastrous consequences of illicit sexual relations which we dealt with in an earlier part of this chapter,[4] and of which we shall have more to say presently.[5] From thinking, rightly or wrongly, that sexual intercourse between certain persons is fraught with serious dangers, the savage jumped to the conclusion that social intercourse between them may be also perilous by virtue of a sort of physical infection acting through simple contact or even at a distance; or if, in many cases, he did not go so far as to suppose that for a man merely to see or touch his mother-in-law sufficed to blast the fertility of his wife's womb, yet he may have thought, with much better reason, that intimate social converse between him and her might easily lead to something worse, and that to guard against such a possibility it was best to raise a strong barrier of etiquette between them. It is not, of course, to be supposed that these rules of avoidance were the result of deliberate legislation; rather they were the spontaneous and gradual growth of feelings and thoughts of which the savages themselves perhaps had no clear consciousness. In what precedes I have merely attempted to sum up in language intelligible to civilized man the outcome of a long course of moral and social evolution.

These considerations perhaps obviate to some extent the only serious difficulty which lies in the way of the theory

[1] See above, pp. 78 *sq.*, 81.
[2] See above, pp. 80, 81, 84.
[3] See above, p. 81.
[4] See above, pp. 44 *sqq.*
[5] See below, pp. 102 *sqq.*

here advocated. If the custom of avoidance was adopted in order to guard against the danger of incest, how comes it that the custom is often observed towards persons of the same sex, for example, by a man towards his father-in-law as well as towards his mother-in-law? The difficulty is undoubtedly serious: the only way of meeting it that I can suggest is the one I have already indicated. We may suppose that the deeply rooted beliefs of the savage in the fatal effects of marriage between certain classes of persons, whether relations by blood or connexions by marriage, gradually spread in his mind so as to embrace the relations between men and men as well as between men and women; till he had worked himself into the conviction that to see or touch his father-in-law, for example, was nearly or quite as dangerous as to touch or have improper relations with his mother-in-law. It is no doubt easy for us to detect the flaw in this process of reasoning; but we should beware of casting stones at the illogical savage, for it is possible or even probable that many of our own cherished convictions are no better founded.

The mutual avoidance between persons of the same sex was probably an extension by false analogy of the mutual avoidance between persons of different sexes.

Viewed from this standpoint the customs of ceremonial avoidance among savages assume a serious aspect very different from the appearance of arbitrariness and absurdity which they are apt to present to the civilized observer who does not look below the surface of savage society. So far as these customs have helped, as they probably have done, to suppress the tendency to inbreeding, that is, to the marriage of near relations, we must conclude that their effect has been salutary, if, as many eminent biologists hold, long-continued inbreeding is injurious to the stock, whether animal or vegetable, by rendering it in the end infertile.[1] However, men of science are as yet by no means agreed as to the results of consanguineous marriages, and a living authority on the subject has recently closed a review of the evidence as follows: "When we take into account such evidence as there is from animals and plants, and such studies as those of Huth,[2] and

The custom of mutual avoidance between near relations has probably had the effect of checking the practice of inbreeding.

[1] On the question of the effect of inbreeding see *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 160 *sqq.*

[2] A. H. Huth, *The Marriage of Near Kin considered with respect to the Laws of Nations, the Results of Experience, and the Teachings of Biology*, Second Edition (London, 1887).

the instances and counter-instances of communities with a high degree of consanguinity, we are led to the conclusion that the prejudices and laws of many peoples against the marriage of near kin rest on a basis not so much biological as social."[1] Whatever may be the ultimate verdict of science on this disputed question, it will not affect the result of the present enquiry, which merely affirms the deep and far-reaching influence which in the long course of human history superstition has exercised on morality. Whether the influence has on the whole been for good or evil does not concern us. It suffices for our purpose to shew that superstition has been a crutch to morality, whether to support it in the fair way of virtue or to precipitate it into the miry pit of vice. To return to the point from which we wandered into this digression, we must leave in suspense the question whether the Australian savages were wise or foolish who forbade a man under pain of death to speak to his mother-in-law.

Other examples of the severe punishment of sexual crime.

I will conclude this part of my subject with a few more instances of the extreme severity with which certain races have visited what they deemed improper connexions between the sexes.

The Indians of Brazil.

Among the Indians who inhabited the coast of Brazil near Rio de Janeiro about the middle of the sixteenth century, a married woman who gave birth to an illegitimate child was either killed or abandoned to the caprice of the young men who could not afford to keep a wife. Her child was buried alive; for they said that were he to grow up he would only serve to perpetuate his mother's disgrace; he would not be allowed to go to war with the rest for fear of the misfortunes and disasters he might draw down upon them, and no one would eat any food, whether venison, fish, or what not, which the miserable outcast had touched.[2]

The natives of Ruanda.

In Ruanda, a district of Central Africa, down to recent years any unmarried woman who was got with child used to be put to death with her baby, whether born or unborn. A spot at the mouth of the Akanyaru river was the place of execution,

[1] J. Arthur Thomson, article "Consanguinity," in Dr. James Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, iv. (Edinburgh, 1911) p. 30.

[2] André Thevet, *La Cosmographie Universelle* (Paris, 1575), ii. 933 [967].

where the guilty women and their innocent offspring were hurled into the water. As usual, this Puritanical strictness of morality has been relaxed under European influence; illegitimate children are still killed, but their mothers escape with the fine of a cow.[1] Among the Saxons down to the days of St. Boniface the adulteress or the maiden who had dishonoured her father's house was compelled to hang herself, was burned, and her paramour hung over the blazing pile; or she was scourged or cut to pieces with knives by all the women of the village till she was dead.[2] Among the Slav peoples of the Balkan peninsula women convicted of immoral conduct used to be stoned to death. About the year 1770 a young betrothed couple were thus executed near Cattaro in Dalmatia, because the girl was found to be with child. The youth offered to marry her, and the priest begged that the sentence of death might be commuted to perpetual banishment; but the people declared that they would not have a bastard born among them; and the two fathers of the luckless couple threw the first stones at them. When Miss M. Edith Durham related this case to some Montenegrin peasantry, they all said that in the old days stoning was the proper punishment for unchaste women; the male paramours were shot by the relations of the girls whom they had seduced. When "that modern Messalina," Queen Draga of Servia, was murdered, a decent peasant woman remarked that "she ought to be under the cursed stone heap" (*pod prokletu gomilu*). The country-folk of Montenegro, who heard the news of the murder from Miss Durham, "looked on it as a cleansing—a casting out of abominations—and genuinely believed that Europe would commend the deed, and that the removal of this sinful woman would bring prosperity to the land."[3] Even down to the second half of the

The Saxons.

The Southern Slavs.

[1] Father P. Schumacher, "Das Eherecht in Ruanda," *Anthropos*, vii. (1912) p. 4.

[2] H. H. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, New Impression (London, 1903), ii. 54.

[3] These particulars as to the Slavonic peoples of the Balkan peninsula I take from a letter with which Miss M. Edith Durham, one of our best authorities on these races, was so good as to favour me. Her letter is dated 116a King Henry's Road, London, N.W., October 16th, 1909. The stoning of the betrothed couple near Cattaro is recorded, so Miss Durham tells me, in a Servian book, *Narodne Pripovjetke i Presude*, by Vuk Vrcević. For many more

nineteenth century in cases of seduction among the Southern Slavs the people proposed to stone both the culprits to death.[1] This happened, for example, in Herzegovina in the year 1859, when a young man named Milutin seduced or (to be more exact) was seduced by three unmarried girls and got them all with child. The people sat in judgment upon the sinners, and, though an elder proposed to stone them all, the court passed a milder sentence. The young man was to marry one of the girls, to rear the infants of the other two as his legitimate children, and next time there was a fight with the Turks he was to prove his manhood by rushing unarmed upon the enemy and wresting their weapons from them, alive or dead. The sentence was fulfilled to the letter, though many years passed before the culprit could carry out the last part of it. However, his time came in 1875, when Herzegovina revolted against the Turks. Then Milutin ran unarmed upon a regiment of the enemy and found among the Turkish bayonets a hero's death.[2] Even now the Old Catholics among the South Slavs believe that a village in which a seducer is not compelled to marry his victim will be punished with hail and excessive rain. For this article of faith, however, they are ridiculed by their enlightened Catholic neighbours, who hold the far more probable view that thunder and lightning are caused by the village priest to revenge himself for unreasonable delays in the payment of his salary. A heavy hail-storm has been known to prove almost fatal to the local incumbent, who was beaten within an inch of his life by his enraged parishioners.[3]

Inference from the severe punishments inflicted for sexual offences.

It is difficult to believe that in these and similar cases the community would inflict such severe punishment for sexual offences if it did not believe that its own safety, and not merely the interest of a few individuals, was imperilled thereby.

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examples of the death penalty and other severe punishments inflicted for sexual offences, see E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas* (London, 1906–1908), ii. 366 *sqq.*, 425 *sqq.*

[1] F. S. Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch der Südslaven* (Vienna, 1885), pp. 209, 216, 217. Compare F. Demelić, *Le Droit Coutumier des Slaves Méridionaux* (Paris, 1876), p. 76.

[2] F. S. Krauss, *op. cit.* pp. 208-212, citing as his authority Vuk Vrčević, *Niz srpskih pripovijedaka*, pp. 129-137.

[3] F. S. Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 204.

If now we ask why illicit relations between the sexes should be supposed to disturb the balance of nature and particularly to blast the fruits of the earth, a partial answer may be conjecturally suggested. It is not enough to say that such relations are displeasing to the gods, who punish indiscriminately the whole community for the sins of a few. For we must always bear in mind that the gods are creations of man's fancy; he fashions them in human likeness, and endows them with tastes and opinions which are merely vast cloudy projections of his own. To affirm, therefore, that something is a sin because the gods will it so, is only to push the enquiry one stage farther back and to raise the further question, Why are the gods supposed to dislike and punish these particular acts? In the case with which we are here concerned, the reason why so many savage gods prohibit adultery, fornication, and incest under pain of their severe displeasure may perhaps be found in the analogy which many savage men trace between the reproduction of the human species and the reproduction of animals and plants. The analogy is not purely fanciful, on the contrary it is real and vital; but primitive peoples have given it a false extension in a vain attempt to apply it practically to increasing the food supply. They have imagined, in fact, that by performing or abstaining from certain sexual acts they thereby directly promoted the reproduction of animals and the multiplication of plants.[1] All such acts and abstinences, it is obvious, are purely superstitious and wholly fail to effect the desired

Why should illicit relations between the sexes be thought to disturb the balance of nature?

The reason why the gods of savages are supposed to punish sexual crimes so severely may perhaps be found in a mistaken belief that irregularities of the human sexes prevent the reproduction of

[1] For examples of the attempt to multiply edible plants in this fashion, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 97 *sqq*. The reported examples of similar attempts to assist the multiplication of animals seem to be rarer. For some instances see George Catlin, *O-Kee-Pa, a Religious Ceremony and other Customs of the Mandans* (London, 1867), Folium Reservatum, pp. i.-iii. (multiplication of buffaloes); *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark to the Sources of the Missouri* (London, 1905), i. 209 *sq*. (multiplication or attraction of buffaloes); Maximilian Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das innere Nord-America* (Coblentz, 1839–1841), ii. 181, 263-267 (multiplication or attraction of buffaloes); *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v. (1904) p. 271 (multiplication of turtles); J. Roscoe, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 53; *id.*, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 144 (multiplication of edible green locusts); S. Gason, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1895) p. 174 (multiplication of edible rats); *id.*, "The Dieyerie Tribe," in *Native Tribes of South Australia* (Adelaide, 1879), p. 280 (multiplication of dogs and snakes).

edible animals and plants and thereby strike a fatal blow at the food supply.

result. They are not religious but magical; that is, they compass their end, not by an appeal to the gods, but by manipulating natural forces in accordance with certain false ideas of physical causation. In the present case the principle on which savages seek to propagate animals and plants is that of magical sympathy or imitation: they fancy that they assist the reproductive process in nature by mimicking or performing it among themselves. Now in the evolution of society such efforts to control the course of nature directly by means of magical rites appear to have preceded the efforts to control it indirectly by appealing to the vanity and cupidity, the good-nature and pity of the gods; in short, magic seems to be older than religion.[1] In most races, it is true, the epoch of unadulterated magic, of magic untinged by religion, belongs to such a remote past that its existence, like that of our ape-like ancestors, can be a matter of inference only; almost everywhere in history and the world we find magic and religion side by side, at one time allies, at another enemies, now playing into each other's hands, now cursing, objurgating, and vainly attempting to exterminate one another. On the whole the lower intelligences cling closely, though secretly, to magic, while the higher intelligences have discerned the vanity of its pretensions and turned to religion instead. The result has been that beliefs and rites which were purely magical in origin often contract in course of time a religious character; they are modified in accordance with the advance of thought, they are translated into terms of gods and spirits, whether good and beneficent, or evil and malignant. We may surmise, though we cannot prove, that a change of this sort has come over the minds of many races with regard to sexual morality. At some former time, perhaps, straining a real analogy too far, they believed that those relations of the human sexes which for any reason they regarded as right and natural had a tendency to promote sympathetically the propagation of animals and plants and thereby to ensure a supply of food for the community; while on the contrary they may have imagined that those relations of the human sexes which for any reason

[1] I have given my reasons for thinking so elsewhere (*The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 220 *sqq.*).

they deemed wrong and unnatural had a tendency to thwart and impede the propagation of animals and plants and thereby to diminish the common supply of food.

Such a belief would account both for the horror with which many savages regard such crimes, and for the severity with which they punish them.

Such a belief, it is obvious, would furnish a sufficient motive for the strict prohibition of what were deemed improper relations between men and women; and it would explain the deep horror and detestation with which sexual irregularities are viewed by many, though certainly not by all, savage tribes. For if improper relations between the human sexes prevent animals and plants from multiplying, they strike a fatal blow at the existence of the tribe by cutting off its supply of food at the roots. No wonder, therefore, that wherever such superstitions have prevailed the whole community, believing its very existence to be put in jeopardy by sexual immorality, should turn savagely on the culprits, and beat, burn, drown or otherwise exterminate them in order to rid itself of so dangerous a pollution. And when with the advance of knowledge men began to perceive the mistake they had made in imagining that the commerce of the human sexes could affect the propagation of animals and plants, they would still through long habit be so inured to the idea of the wickedness of certain sexual relations that they could not dismiss it from their minds, even when they discerned the fallacious nature of the reasoning by which they had arrived at it. The old practice would therefore stand, though the old theory had fallen: the old rules of sexual morality would continue to be observed, but if they were to retain the respect of the community, it was necessary to place them on a new theoretical basis. That basis, in accordance with the general advance of thought, was supplied by religion. Sexual relations which had once been condemned as wrong and unnatural because they were supposed to thwart the natural multiplication of animals and plants and thereby to diminish the food supply, would now be condemned because it was imagined that they were displeasing to gods or spirits, those stalking-horses which savage man rigs out in the cast-off clothes of his still more savage ancestors. The moral practice would therefore remain the same, though its theoretical basis had been shifted from magic to religion. In this or some such way as this

we may conjecture that the Karens, Dyaks, and other savages reached those curious conceptions of sexual immorality and its consequences which we have been considering. But from the nature of the case the development of moral theory which I have sketched is purely hypothetical and hardly admits of verification.

But the reason why savages came to regard certain sexual relations as irregular and immoral remains obscure.

However, even if we assume for a moment that the savages in question reached their present view of sexual immorality in the way I have surmised, there still remains the question, How did they originally come to regard certain relations of the sexes as immoral? For clearly the notion that such immorality interferes with the course of nature must have been secondary and derivative: people must on independent grounds have concluded that certain relations between men and women were wrong and injurious before they extended the conclusion by false analogy to nature. The question brings us face to face with the deepest and darkest problem in the history of society, the problem of the origin of the laws which still regulate marriage and the relations of the sexes among civilized nations; for broadly speaking the fundamental laws which we recognize in these matters are recognized also by savages, with this difference, that among many savages the sexual prohibitions are far more numerous, the horror excited by breaches of them far deeper, and the punishment inflicted on the offenders far sterner than with us. The problem has often been attacked, but never solved. Perhaps it is destined, like so many riddles of that Sphinx which we call nature, to remain for ever insoluble. At all events this is not the place to broach so intricate and profound a discussion. I return to my immediate subject.

Sexual immorality is thought by many savages to injure the delinquents themselves, their offspring, and their innocent spouses.

In the opinion of many savages the effect of sexual immorality is not merely to disturb, directly or indirectly, the course of nature by blighting the crops, causing the earth to quake, volcanoes to vomit fire, and so forth: the delinquents themselves, their offspring, or their innocent spouses are supposed to suffer in their own persons for the sin that has been committed. Thus among the Baganda of Central Africa "adultery was also regarded as a danger to children; it was thought that women who were guilty of it

during pregnancy caused the child to die, either prior to birth, or at the time of birth. Sometimes the guilty woman would herself die in childbed; or, if she was safely delivered, she would have a tendency to devour her child, and would have to be guarded lest she should kill it."[1] "When there was a case of retarded delivery, the relatives attributed it to adultery; they made the woman confess the name of the man with whom she had had intercourse, and if she died, her husband was fined by the members of her clan, for they said: 'We did not give our daughter to you for the purpose of adultery, and you should have guarded her.' In most cases, however, the medicine-men were able to save the woman's life, and upon recovery she was upbraided, and the man whom she accused was heavily fined."[2] The Baganda thought that the infidelity of the father as well as of the mother endangered the life of the child. For "it was also supposed that a man who had sexual intercourse with any woman not his wife, during the time that any one of his wives was nursing a child, would cause the child to fall ill, and that unless he confessed his guilt and obtained from the medicine-man the necessary remedies to cancel the evil results, the child would die."[3] The common childish ailment which was thought to be caused by the adultery of the father or mother was called *amakiro*, and its symptoms were well recognized: they consisted of nausea and general debility, and the only cure for them was a frank confession by the guilty parent and the performance of a magical ceremony by the medicine-man.[4]

Disastrous effects of adultery on adulteress and her child.

Similar views as to the disastrous effects of adultery on mother and child seem to be widespread among Bantu tribes. Thus among the Awemba of Northern Rhodesia, when both mother and child die in childbirth, great horror is expressed by all, who assert that the woman must assuredly have committed adultery with many men to suffer such a fate. They exhort her even with her last breath to name the

[1] Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 262.

[2] Rev. J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* p. 55. Compare *id.*, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 39.

[3] Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 262.

[4] Rev. J. Roscoe, *op. cit.* pp. 72, 102.

adulterer; and whoever is mentioned by her is called the "murderer" (*musoka*) and has afterwards to pay a heavy fine to the injured husband. Similarly if the child is born dead and the mother survives, the Awemba take it for granted that the woman has been unfaithful to her husband, and they ask her to name the murderer of her child, that is, the man whose guilty love has been the death of the babe.[1] In like manner the Thonga, a Bantu tribe of South Africa, about Delagoa Bay, are of opinion that if a woman's travail pangs are unduly prolonged or she fails to bring her offspring to the birth, she must certainly have committed adultery, and they insist upon her making a clean breast as the only means of ensuring her delivery; should she suppress the name even of one of several lovers with whom she may have gone astray, the child cannot be born. So convinced are the women of the sufferings which adultery, if unacknowledged, entails on the guilty mother in childbed, that a woman who knows her child to be illegitimate will privately confess her sin to the midwife before she is actually brought to bed, in the hope thereby of alleviating and shortening her travail pangs.[2]

Sympathetic relation between an adulterer and the injured husband.

Further, the Thonga believe that adultery establishes a physical relationship of mutual sympathy between the adulterer and the injured husband such that the life of the one is in a manner bound up with the life of the other; indeed this relationship is thought to arise between any two men who have had sexual connexion with the same woman. As a native put it to a missionary, "They have met together in one life through the blood of that woman; they have drunk from the same pool." To express it otherwise, they have formed a blood covenant with each other through the woman as intermediary. "This establishes between them a most curious mutual dependence: should one of them be ill, the other must not visit him; the patient might die. If he runs a thorn into his foot, the other must not help him to extract it. It is taboo. The wound would not heal. If he dies, his rival must not assist at his mourning or he would die

[1] Cullen Gouldsbury and Hubert Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1911), pp. 57, 178.

[2] Henri A. Junod, "Les Conceptions Physiologiques des Bantou Sud-Africains et leurs Tabous," *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie*, i. (1910) p. 150; *id.*, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchatel, 1912–1913), i. 38 *sq.*

himself." Hence if a man has committed adultery, as sometimes happens, with one of his father's younger wives, and the father dies, his undutiful son may not take the part which would otherwise fall to him in the funeral rites; indeed should he attempt to attend the burial, his relations would drive him away in pity, lest by this mark of respect and perhaps of remorse he should forfeit his life.[1] In like manner the Akikuyu of British East Africa believe that if a son has adulterous intercourse with one of his father's wives, the innocent father, not the guilty young scapegrace, contracts a dangerous pollution (*thahu*), the effect of which is to make him ill and emaciated or to break out into sores or boils, and even in all probability to die, if the danger is not averted by the timely intervention of a medicine-man.[2] The Anyanja of British Central Africa believe that if a man commits adultery while his wife is with child, she will die; hence on the death of his wife the widower is often roundly accused of having killed her by his infidelity.[3] Without going so far as this, the Masai of German East Africa hold that if a father were to touch his infant on the day after he had been guilty of adultery, the child would fall sick.[4] According to the Akamba of British East Africa, if a woman after giving birth to a child is false to her husband before her first menstruation, the child will surely die.[5] The Akamba are also of opinion that if a woman is guilty of incest with her brother she will be unable to bring to the birth the seed which she has conceived by him. In that case the man must purge his sin by bringing a big goat to the elders, and the woman is ceremonially smeared with the contents of the

Injurious effects of adultery on the innocent husband, wife, or child.

Injurious effects of incest on the offspring.

[1] Henri A. Junod, "Les Conceptions Physiologiques des Bantous Sud-Africains et leurs Tabous," *Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie*, i. (1910) p. 150; *id.*, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, i. 194 *sq.*

[2] C. W. Hobley, "Kikuyu Customs and Beliefs," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 433. A similar state of ceremonial pollution (*thahu*) is supposed by the Akikuyu to arise on many other occasions, which are enumerated by Mr. Hobley (*op. cit.* pp. 428-440). See further below, p. 115, note [5].

[3] H. S. Stannus, "Notes on some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 305. Compare R. C. F. Maugham, *Zambezia* (London, 1910), p. 326.

[4] Max Weiss, *Die Völkerstämme im Norden Deutsch-Ostafrikas* (Berlin, 1910), p. 385.

[5] C. W. Hobley, *Ethnology of A-Kamba and other East African Tribes* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 61.

animal's stomach.[1] Among the Washamba of German East Africa it happened that a married woman lost three children, one after the other, by death. A diviner being called in to ascertain the cause of this calamity, attributed it to incest of which she had been accidentally guilty with her father.[2]

Wife's infidelity at home thought to endanger the absent husband in the chase or the war.

Again, it appears to be a common notion with savages that the infidelity of a wife prevents her husband from killing game, and even exposes him to imminent risk of being himself killed or wounded by wild beasts. This belief is entertained by the Wagogo and other peoples of East Africa, by the Moxos Indians of Bolivia, and by Aleutian hunters of sea-otters. In such cases any mishap that befalls the husband during the chase is set down by him to the score of his wife's misconduct at home; he returns in wrath and visits his ill-luck on the often innocent object of his suspicions even, it may be, to the shedding of her blood.[3] While the Huichol Indians of Mexico are away seeking for a species of cactus which they regard as sacred, their women at home are bound to be strictly chaste; otherwise they believe that they would be visited with illness and would endanger the success of the men's expedition.[4] An old writer on Madagascar tells us that though Malagasy women are voluptuous they will not allow themselves to be drawn into an intrigue while their husbands are absent at the wars, for they believe that infidelity at such a time would cause the absent spouse to be wounded or slain.[5] The Baganda of Central Africa held similar views as to the fatal effect which a wife's adultery at home might have on her absent husband at the wars; they thought that the gods resented her misconduct and withdrew their favour and protection from her warrior spouse, thus punishing the innocent instead of the guilty. Indeed, it was believed that

1 C. W. Hobley, *op. cit.* p. 103.

2 A. Karasek, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Waschambaa," *Baessler-Archiv*, i. (1911) p. 186.

3 P. Reichard, *Deutsch Ostafrika* (Leipsic, 1892), p. 427; H. Cole, "Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) pp. 318 *sq.*; A. D'Orbigny, *Voyage dans l'Amérique méridionale*, iii. Part i. (Paris and Strasburg, 1844) p. 226; Ivan Petroff, *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, p. 155.

4 C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), ii. 128 *sq.*

5 De Flacourt, *Histoire de la Grande Isle Madagascar* (Paris, 1658), pp. 97 *sq.* Compare John Struys, *Voiages and Travels* (London, 1684), p. 22; Abbé Rochon, *Voyage to Madagascar and the East Indies*, translated from the French (London, 1792), pp. 46 *sq.*

if a woman were even to touch a man's clothing while her husband was away with the army, it would bring misfortune on her husband's weapon, and might even cost him his life. The gods of the Baganda were most particular about women strictly observing the taboos during their husbands' absence and having nothing to do with other men all that time. On his return from the war a man tested his wife's fidelity by drinking water from a gourd which she handed to him before he entered his house. If she had been unfaithful to him during his absence, the water was supposed to make him ill ; hence should it chance that he fell sick after drinking the draught, his wife was at once clapped into the stocks and tried for adultery ; and if she confessed her guilt and named her paramour, the offender was heavily fined or even put to death.[1] Similarly among the Bangala or the Boloki of the Upper Congo, " when men went to fight distant towns their wives were expected not to commit adultery with such men as were left in the town, or their husbands would receive spear wounds from the enemy. The sisters of the fighters would take every precaution to guard against the adultery of their brothers' wives while they were on the expedition."[2] So among the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands, while the men were away at the wars, their wives " all slept in one house to keep watch over each other ; for, if a woman were unfaithful to her husband while he was with a war-party, he would probably be killed."[3] If only King David had held this belief he might have contented himself with a single instead of a double crime, and need not have sent his Machiavellian order to put the injured husband in the forefront of the battle.[4]

Injurious effect of wife's infidelity on her husband.

The Zulus imagine that an unfaithful wife who touches her husband's furniture without first eating certain herbs causes him to be seized with a fit of coughing of which he soon dies. Moreover, among the Zulus " a man who has

[1] Rev. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 352, 362, 363, *sq.*

[2] Rev. John H. Weeks, " Anthropological Notes on the Bangala of the Upper Congo River," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 413 ; *id.*, *Among Congo Cannibals* (London, 1913), p. 224.

[3] J. R. Swanton, " Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida," p. 56 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. v. Part i., Leyden and New York, 1905).

[4] 2 Samuel xi.

had criminal intercourse with a sick person's wife is prohibited from visiting the sick-chamber; and, if the sick person is a woman, any female who has committed adultery with her husband must not visit her. They say that, if these visits ever take place, the patient is immediately oppressed with a cold perspiration and dies. This prohibition was thought to find out the infidelities of the women and to make them fear discovery."[1] For a similar reason, apparently, during the sickness of a Caffre chief his tribe was bound to observe strict continence under pain of death.[2] The notion seems to have been that any act of incontinence would through some sort of magical sympathy prove fatal to the sick chief. The Ovakumbi, a tribe in the south of Angola, think that the carnal intercourse of young people under the age of puberty would cause the king to die within the year, if it were not severely punished. The punishment for such a treasonable offence used to be death.[3] Similarly, in the kingdom of Congo, when the sacred pontiff, called the Chitomé, was going his rounds throughout the country, all his subjects had to live strictly chaste, and any person found guilty of incontinence at such times was put to death without mercy. They thought that universal chastity was essential to the preservation of the life of the pontiff, whom they revered as the head of their religion and their common father. Accordingly when he was abroad he took care to warn his faithful subjects by a public crier, that no man might plead ignorance as an excuse for a breach of the law.[4]

African chiefs thought to be injuriously affected by the incontinence of their subjects.

Injurious effects of adultery on the adulteress.

Speaking of the same region of West Africa, an old writer tells us that "conjugal chastity is singularly respected among these people; adultery is placed in the list of the greatest crimes. By an opinion generally received, the women are persuaded that if they were to render themselves guilty of infidelity, the greatest misfortunes would overwhelm

[1] "Mr. Farewell's Account of Chaka, the King of Natal," Appendix to W. F. W. Owen's *Narrative of Voyages to explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar* (London, 1833), ii. 395.

[2] L. Alberti, *De Kaffers* (Amsterdam, 1810), p. 171.

[3] C. Wunenberger, "La Mission et le Royaume de Humbé, sur les bords du Cunène," *Les Missions Catholiques*, xx. (1888), p. 262.

[4] J. B. Labat, *Relation historique de l'Éthiopie occidentale* (Paris, 1732), i. 259 *sq*.

them, unless they averted them by an avowal made to their husbands, and in obtaining their pardon for the injury they might have done."[1] The Looboos of Sumatra think that an unmarried young woman who has been got with child falls thereby into a dangerous state called *looï*, which is such that she spreads misfortune wherever she goes. Hence when she enters a house, the people try to drive her out by force.[2] Amongst the Sulka of New Britain unmarried people who have been guilty of unchastity are believed to contract thereby a fatal pollution (*sle*) of which they will die, if they do not confess their fault and undergo a public ceremony of purification. Such persons are avoided: no one will take anything at their hands: parents point them out to their children and warn them not to go near them. The infection which they are supposed to spread is apparently physical rather than moral in its nature; for special care is taken to keep the paraphernalia of the dance out of their way, the mere presence of persons so polluted being thought to tarnish the paint on the instruments. Men who have contracted this dangerous taint rid themselves of it by drinking sea-water mixed with shredded coco-nut and ginger, after which they are thrown into the sea. Emerging from the water they put off the dripping clothes which they wore during their state of defilement and cast them away. This purification is believed to save their lives, which otherwise must have been destroyed by their unchastity.[3] Among the Buduma of Lake Chad, in Central Africa, at the present day "a child born out of wedlock is looked on as a disgrace, and must be drowned. If this is not done, great misfortunes

Dangerous pollution supposed to be incurred by unchastity.

[1] Proyart, "History of Loango, Kakongo, and other Kingdoms in Africa," in J. Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels* (London, 1808–1814), xvi. 569.

[2] J. Kreemer, "De Loeboes in Mandailing," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie*, lxvi. (1912) p. 323.

[3] *P.* Rascher, M.S.C., "Die Sulka, ein Beitrag zur Ethnographie Neu-Pommern," *Archiv für Anthropologie*, xxix. (1904) p. 211; R. Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Sudsee* (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 179 *sq.* In the East Indian island of Buru a man's death is sometimes supposed to be due to the adultery of his wife; but apparently the notion is that the death is brought about rather by the evil magic of the adulterer than by the act of adultery itself. See J. H. W. van der Miesen, "Een en ander over Boeroe, inzonderheit wat betreft het distrikt Waisama, gelegen aan de Z.O. Kust," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlvi. (1902) pp. 451-454.

will happen to the tribe. All the men will fall sick, and the women, cows and goats will become barren."[1]

Conclusion.

These examples may suffice to shew that among many races sexual immorality, whether in the form of adultery, fornication, or incest, is believed of itself to entail, naturally and inevitably, without the intervention of society, most serious consequences not only on the culprits themselves, but also on the community, often indeed to menace the very existence of the whole people by destroying the food supply. I need hardly remind you that all these beliefs are entirely baseless; no such consequences flow from such acts; in short, the beliefs in question are a pure superstition. Yet we cannot doubt that wherever this superstition has existed it must have served as a powerful motive to deter men from adultery, fornication, and incest. If that is so, then I think I have proved my third proposition, which is, that among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for marriage, and has thereby contributed to the stricter observance of the rules of sexual morality both among the married and the unmarried.

[1] P. A. Talbot, "The Buduma of Lake Chad," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xli. (1911) p. 247.

V

RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

I PASS now to my fourth and last proposition, which is, that among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for human life and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment.

Superstition as a prop to the security of human life.

The particular superstition which has had this salutary effect is the fear of ghosts, especially the ghosts of the murdered. The fear of ghosts is widespread, perhaps universal, among savages; it is hardly extinct among ourselves. If it were extinct, some learned societies might put up their shutters. Dead or alive, the fear of ghosts has certainly not been an unmixed blessing. Indeed it might with some show of reason be maintained that no belief has done so much to retard the economic and thereby the social progress of mankind as the belief in the immortality of the soul; for this belief has led race after race, generation after generation, to sacrifice the real wants of the living to the imaginary wants of the dead. The waste and destruction of life and property which this faith has entailed are enormous and incalculable. Without entering into details I will illustrate by a single example the disastrous economic, political, and moral consequences which flow from that systematic destruction of property which the fear of the dead has imposed on many races. Speaking of the Patagonians, the well-informed and intelligent traveller d'Orbigny observes: "They have no laws, no punishments inflicted on the guilty. Each lives as he pleases, and the greatest thief is the most highly esteemed, because he is the most dexterous. A motive

The fear of ghosts.

Disastrous consequences entailed by the fear of the dead.

which will always prevent them from abandoning the practice of theft, and at the same time will always present an obstacle to their ever forming fixed settlements, is the religious prejudice which, on the death of one of their number, obliges them to destroy his property. A Patagonian, who has amassed during the whole of his life an estate by thieving from the whites or exchanging the products of the chase with neighbouring tribes, has done nothing for his heirs; all his savings are destroyed with him, and his children are obliged to rebuild their fortunes afresh,—a custom which, I may observe in passing, is found also among the Tamanaques of the Orinoco, who ravage the field of the deceased and cut down the trees which he has planted;[1] and among the Yuracares, who abandon and shut up the house of the dead, regarding it as a profanation to gather a single fruit from the trees of his field. It is easy to see that with such customs they can nourish no real ambition since their needs are limited to themselves; it is one of the causes of their natural indolence and is a motive which, so long as it exists, will always impede the progress of their civilization. Why should they trouble themselves about the future when they have nothing to hope from it? The present is all in all in their eyes, and their only interest is individual; the son will take no care of his father's herd, since it will never come into his possession; he busies himself only with his own affairs and soon turns his thoughts to looking after himself and getting a livelihood. This custom has certainly something to commend it from the moral point of view in so far as it destroys all the motives for that covetousness in heirs which is too often to be seen in our cities. The desire or the hope of a speedy death of their parents cannot exist, since the parents leave absolutely nothing to their children; but on the other hand, if the Patagonians had preserved hereditary properties, they would without doubt have been to-day in possession of numerous herds, and would necessarily have been more formidable to the whites, since their power in that case would have been more than doubled, whereas their present habits will infallibly leave them in a stationary state, from which nothing but a radical change

[1] Humboldt, *Voyage aux Régions Equinoxiales*, viii. 273.

will be able to deliver them."[1] Thus poverty, indolence, improvidence, political weakness, and all the hardships of a nomadic life are the miserable inheritance which the fear of the dead entails on these wretched Indians. Heavy indeed is the toll which superstition exacts from all who pass within her gloomy portal.

Fear of the ghosts of the slain a check on murder.

But I am not here concerned with the disastrous and deplorable consequences, the unspeakable follies and crimes and miseries, which have flowed in practice from the theory of a future life. My business at present is with the more cheerful side of the subject, with the wholesome, though groundless, terror which ghosts, apparitions, and spectres strike into the breasts of hardened ruffians and desperadoes. So far as such persons reflect at all and regulate their passions by the dictates of prudence, it seems plain that a fear of ghostly retribution, of the angry spirit of their victim, must act as a salutary restraint on their disorderly impulses; it must reinforce the dread of purely secular punishment and furnish the choleric and malicious with a fresh motive for pausing before they imbrue their hands in blood. This is so obvious, and the fear of ghosts is so notorious, that both might perhaps be taken for granted, especially at this late hour of the evening. But for the sake of completeness I will mention a few illustrative facts, taking them almost at random from distant races in order to indicate the wide diffusion of this particular superstition. I shall try to shew that while all ghosts are feared, the ghosts of slain men are especially dreaded by their slayers.

Ancient Greek belief as to the anger of a ghost at his slayer.

The ancient Greeks believed that the soul of any man who had just been killed was angry with his slayer and troubled him; hence even an involuntary homicide had to

[1] Alcide d'Orbigny, *Voyage dans l'Amérique Méridionale*, ii. (Paris and Strasburg, 1839–1843) pp. 99 *sq.* As to the thieving propensities of the Patagonians, the author tells us that "they do not steal among themselves, it is true; but their parents, from their tender infancy, teach them to consider theft from the enemy as the base of their education, as an accomplishment indispensable for every one who would succeed in life, as a thing ordained by the Evil Spirit, so much so that when they are reproached for a theft, they always say that Achekenat-Kanet commanded them so to do" (*op. cit.* p. 104). Achekenat-Kanet is the supernatural being who, under various names, is revered or dreaded by all the Indian tribes of Patagonia. Sometimes he appears as a good and sometimes as a bad spirit. See A. d'Orbigny, *op. cit.* ii. 87.

depart from his country for a year until the wrath of the dead man had cooled down; nor might the slayer return until sacrifice had been offered and ceremonies of purification performed. If his victim chanced to be a foreigner, the homicide had to shun the country of the dead man as well as his own.[1] The legend of the matricide Orestes, how he roamed from place to place pursued and maddened by the ghost of his murdered mother, reflects faithfully the ancient Greek conception of the fate which overtakes the murderer at the hands of the ghost.[2]

Among the Greeks a manslayer was dreaded and shunned because he was thought to be haunted by the angry and dangerous ghost of his victim.

But it is important to observe that not only does the hag-ridden homicide go in terror of his victim's ghost; he is himself an object of fear and aversion to the whole community on account of the angry and dangerous spirit which dogs his steps. It was probably more in self-defence than out of consideration for the manslayer that Attic law compelled him to quit the country. This comes out clearly from the provisions of the law. For in the first place, on going into banishment the homicide had to follow a prescribed road:[3] obviously it would have been hazardous to let him stray about the country with a wrathful ghost at his heels. In the second place, if another charge was brought against a banished homicide, he was allowed to return to Attica to plead in his defence, but he might not set foot on land; he had to speak from a ship, and even the ship might not cast anchor or put out a gangway. The judges avoided all contact with the culprit, for they judged the case sitting or standing on the shore.[4] Plainly the intention of this rule was literally to insulate the slayer, lest by touching Attic earth even indirectly through the anchor or the gangway he should blast it by a sort of electric shock, as we might say; though doubtless the Greeks would have said that the blight was wrought by contact with the ghost, by a sort of effluence of death. For the same reason if such a man, sailing the

1 Plato, *Laws*, ix. 8, pp. 865 D—866 A; Demosthenes, xxiii. pp. 643 *sq.*; Hesychius, *s.v.* ἀπενιαυτισμός.

2 Aeschylus, *Choëphor.* 1021 *sqq.*, *Eumenides*, 85 *sqq.*; Euripides, *Iphig. in Taur.* 940 *sqq.*; Pausanias, ii. 31. 8, viii. 34. 1-4.

3 Demosthenes, xxiii. pp. 643 *sq.*

4 Demosthenes, xxiii. pp. 645 *sq.*; Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 57; Pausanias, i. 28. 11; Pollux, viii. 120; Helladius, quoted by Photius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 535 A, lines 28 *sqq.* ed. I. Bekker (Berlin, 1824).

sea, happened to be wrecked on the coast of the country where his crime had been committed, he was allowed to camp on the shore till a ship came to take him off, but he was expected to keep his feet in sea-water all the time,[1] evidently to neutralise the ghostly infection and prevent it from spreading to the soil. For the same reason, when the turbulent people of Cynaetha in Arcadia had perpetrated a peculiarly atrocious massacre and had sent envoys to Sparta, all the Arcadian states through which the envoys took their way ordered them out of the country; and after their departure the Mantineans purified themselves and their belongings by sacrificing victims and carrying them round the city and the whole of their land.[2] So when the Athenians had heard of a massacre at Argos, they caused purificatory offerings to be carried round the public assembly.[3]

The legend of Orestes reflects the Greek horror of a manslayer.

No doubt the root of all such observances was a fear of the dangerous ghost which haunts the murderer and against which the whole community as well as the homicide himself must be on its guard. The Greek practice in these respects is clearly mirrored in the legend of Orestes; for it is said that the people of Troezen would not receive him in their houses until he had been purified of his guilt,[4] that is, until he had been rid of his mother's ghost. The Akikuyu of British East Africa think that if a man who has killed another comes and sleeps at a village and eats with a family in their hut, the persons with whom he has eaten contract a dangerous pollution which might prove fatal to them were it not removed in time by a medicine-man. The very skin on which the homicide slept has absorbed the taint and might infect any one else who slept on it. So a medicine-man is sent for to purify the hut and its occupants.[5] The

[1] Plato, *Laws*, ix. 8, p. 866 C D.

[2] Polybius, iv. 17-21

[3] Plutarch, *Praecept. ger. reipub.* xvii. 9.

[4] Pausanias, ii. 31. 8.

[5] C. W. Hobley, "Kikuyu Customs and Beliefs," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 431. The nature of the ceremonial pollution (*thahu*) thus incurred is explained by Mr. Hobley (*op. cit.* p. 428) as follows: "*Thahu*, sometimes called *ngahu*, is the word used for a condition into which a person is believed to fall if he or she accidentally becomes the victim of certain circumstances or intentionally performs certain acts which carry with them a kind of ill luck or curse. A person who is *thahu* becomes emaciated and ill or breaks out into eruptions or boils, and if the *thahu* is not removed will probably die. In many cases this undoubtedly happens by the process of auto-suggestion,

Manslayers purged of the stain of human blood by being smeared with the blood of pigs.

Greek mode of purifying a homicide was to kill a sucking pig and wash the hands of the guilty man in its blood: until this ceremony had been performed the manslayer was not allowed to speak.[1] Among the hill-tribes near Rajamahal in Bengal, if two men quarrel and blood be shed, the one who cut the other is fined a hog or a fowl, "the blood of which is sprinkled over the wounded person, to purify him, and to prevent his being possessed by a devil."[2] In this case the blood-sprinkling is avowedly intended to prevent the man from being haunted by a spirit; only it is not the aggressor but his victim who is supposed to be in danger and therefore to stand in need of purification. We have seen that among these and other savage tribes pig's blood is sprinkled on persons and things as a mode of purifying them from the pollution of sexual crimes.[3] Among the Cameroon negroes in West Africa accidental homicide can be expiated by the blood of an animal. The relations of the slayer and of the slain assemble. An animal is killed, and every person present is smeared with its blood on his face and breast. They think that the guilt of manslaughter is thus atoned for, and that no punishment will overtake the homicide.[4] In Car Nicobar a man possessed by devils is cleansed of them by being rubbed all over with pig's blood and beaten with leaves. The devils are supposed to be thus swept off like flies from the man's body to the leaves, which are then folded up and tied tightly with a special kind of string. A professional exorciser administers the beating, and at every stroke with the leaves he falls down with his face on the floor and calls out in a squeaky

as it never occurs to the Kikuyu mind to be sceptical on a matter of this kind. It is said that the *thahu* condition is caused by the *ngoma* or spirits of departed ancestors, but the process does not seem to have been analysed any further." See also above, pp. 93, 105.

[1] Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 280 *sqq.*, 448 *sqq.*; *id.*, quoted by Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, xix. 254, p. 1183, ἐπιτήδειος ἐδόκει πρὸς καθαρμὸν ὁ σῦς, ὡς δηλοῖ Αἰσχύλος ἐν τῷ, πρὶν ἂν παλαγμοῖς αἵματος χοιροκτόνου αὐτός σε χρᾶναι Ζεὺς καταστάξας χεροῖν; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonaut.* iv. 703-717, with the notes of the scholiast. Purifications of this sort are represented in Greek art. See my note on Pausanias ii. 31. 8 (vol. iii. pp. 276 *sqq.*).

[2] Lieutenant Thomas Shaw, "The Inhabitants of the Hills near Rajamahall," *Asiatic Researches*, Fourth Edition, iv. (London, 1807) p. 78, compare p. 77.

[3] See above, pp. 44 *sqq.*

[4] Missionary Autenrieth, "Zur Religion der Kamerun-Neger," *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, xii. (1893) pp. 93 *sq.*

voice, "Here is a devil." This ceremony is performed by night; and before daybreak all the packets of leaves containing the devils are thrown into the sea.[1] The Greeks similarly used laurel leaves as well as pig's blood in purificatory ceremonies.[2] In all such cases we may assume that the purification was originally conceived as physical rather than as moral, as a sort of detergent which washed, swept, or scraped the ghostly or demoniacal pollution from the person of the ghost-haunted or demon-possessed man. The motive for employing blood in these rites of cleansing is not clear. Perhaps the purgative virtue ascribed to it may have been based on the notion that the offended spirit accepts the blood as a substitute for the blood of the man or woman.[3] However, it is doubtful whether this explanation could cover all the cases in which blood is sprinkled as a mode of purification. Certainly it is odd, as the sage Heraclitus long ago remarked, that blood-stains should be thought to be removed by blood-stains, as if a man who had been bespattered with mud should think to cleanse himself by bespattering himself with more mud.[4] But the ways of man are wonderful and sometimes past finding out.

The matricide Orestes is said to have recovered his wits by biting off one of his own fingers.

There was a curious story that after Orestes had gone mad through murdering his mother he recovered his wits by biting off one of his own fingers; the Furies of his murdered mother, which had appeared black to him before, appeared white as soon as he had mutilated himself in this way: it was as if the taste of his own blood sufficed to avert or disarm the wrathful ghost.[5] A hint of the way in which the blood may have been supposed to produce this result is furnished by the practice of some savages.

Manslayers commonly taste their victims' blood in order not to be haunted by their ghosts.

The Indians of Guiana believe that an avenger of blood who has slain his man must go mad unless he tastes the blood of his victim; the notion apparently is that the ghost drives him crazy,

[1] V. Solomon, "Extracts from Diaries kept in Car Nicobar," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 227.

[2] See my note on Pausanias, ii. 31. 8 (vol. iii. pp. 276 *sqq.*).

[3] This was the view of C. Meiners (*Geschichte der Religionen*, Hanover, 1806–1807, ii. 137 *sq.*), and of E. Rohde (*Psyche*,[3] Tübingen and Leipsic, 1903, ii. 77 *sq.*).

[4] *καθαίρονται δ' ἄλλως αἵματι μιαινόμενοι οἷον εἴ τις εἰς πηλὸν ἐμβὰς πηλῷ ἀπονίζοιτο*, Heraclitus, in H. Diels's *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Zweite Auflage, i. (Berlin, 1906) p. 62.

[5] Pausanias, viii. 34. 3.

just as the ghost of Clytemnestra did to Orestes, who was also, be it remembered, an avenger of blood. In order to avert this consequence the Indian manslayer resorts on the third night to the grave of his victim, pierces the corpse with a sharp-pointed stick, and withdrawing it sucks the blood of the murdered man. After that he goes home with an easy mind, satisfied that he has done his duty and that he has nothing more to fear from the ghost.[1] A similar custom was observed by the Maoris in battle. When a warrior had slain his foe in combat, he tasted his blood, believing that this preserved him from the avenging spirit (*atua*) of his victim; for they imagined that "the moment a slayer had tasted the blood of the slain, the dead man became a part of his being and placed him under the protection of the *atua* or guardian-spirit of the deceased."[2] Thus in the opinion of these savages, by swallowing a portion of their victim they made him a part of themselves and thereby converted him from an enemy into an ally; they established, in the strictest sense of the words, a blood-covenant with him. The Aricara Indians also drank the blood of their slain foes and proclaimed the deed by the mark of a red hand on their faces.[3] The motive for this practice may have been, as with the Maoris, a desire to appropriate and so disarm the ghost of an enemy. In antiquity some of the Scythians used to drink the blood of the first foes they killed; and they also tasted the blood of the friends with whom they made a covenant, for "they take that to be the surest pledge of good faith."[4] The motive of the two customs was probably the same. "To the present day, when a person of another tribe has been slain by a Nandi, the blood must be carefully washed off the spear or sword into a cup made of grass, and drunk by the slayer. If this is not done it is thought that the man will become frenzied."[5] So

Homicides supposed to go mad unless they taste the blood of their victim.

[1] Rev. J. H. Bernau, *Missionary Labours in British Guiana* (London, 1847), pp. 57 *sq.*; R. Schomburgk, *Reisen in Britisch-Guiana* (Leipsic, 1847–1848), ii. 497.

[2] J. Dumont D'Urville, *Voyage autour du monde et à la recherche de la Pérouse* (Paris, 1832–1833), iii. 305.

[3] John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America* (Liverpool, 1817), p. 160.

[4] Pomponius Mela, *Chorogr.* ii. 12, p. 35, ed. G. Parthey (Berlin, 1867).

[5] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 27.

among some tribes of the Lower Niger "it is customary and necessary for the executioner to lick the blood that is on the blade"; moreover "the custom of licking the blood off the blade of a sword by which a man has been killed in war is common to all these tribes, and the explanation given me by the Ibo, which is generally accepted, is, that if this was not done, the act of killing would so affect the strikers as to cause them to run amok among their own people; because the sight and smell of blood render them absolutely senseless as well as regardless of all consequences. And this licking the blood is the only sure remedy, and the only way in which they can recover themselves."[1] So, too, among the Shans of Burma "it was the curious custom of executioners to taste the blood of their victims, as they believed if this were not done illness and death would follow in a short time. In remote times Shan soldiers always bit the bodies of men killed by them in battle."[2] Strange as it may seem, this truly savage superstition exists apparently in Italy to this day. There is a widespread opinion in Calabria that if a murderer is to escape he must suck his victim's blood from the reeking blade of the dagger with which he did the deed.[3] We can now perhaps understand why the matricide Orestes was thought to have recovered his wandering wits as soon as he had bitten off one of his fingers. By tasting his own blood, which was also that of his victim, since she was his mother, he might be supposed to form a blood-covenant with the ghost and so to convert it from a foe into a friend. The Kabyles of North Africa think that if a murderer leaps seven times over his victim's grave within three or seven days of the murder, he will be quite safe. Hence the fresh grave of a murdered man is carefully guarded.[4] The Lushai

Various precautions taken by manslayers against the ghosts of their victims.

[1] Major A. G. Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes* (London, 1906), pp. 180, 181 *sq.*

[2] Mrs. Leslie Milne, *Shans at Home* (London, 1910), p. 192. Among the Shans "in a case of capital punishment more than one executioner assisted, and each tried to avoid giving the fatal blow, so that the sin of killing the culprit should fall upon several, each bearing a part. The unfortunate man was killed by reason of repeated sword cuts, no one of which was sufficient to kill him, and died rather from loss of blood than from one fatal blow" (Mrs. Leslie Milne, *op. cit.* pp. 191 *sq.*). Perhaps each executioner feared to be haunted by his victim's ghost if he actually despatched him.

[3] Vincenzo Dorsa, *La Tradizione greco-latina negli usi e nelle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore* (Cosenza, 1884), p. 138.

[4] J. Liorel, *Kabylie du Jurjura* (Paris, N.D.), p. 441.

of North-Eastern India believe that if a man kills an enemy the ghost of his victim will haunt him and he will go mad, unless he performs a certain ceremony which will make him master of the dead man's soul in the other world. The ceremony includes the sacrifice of an animal, whether a pig, a goat, or a mithan.[1] Among the Awemba of Northern Rhodesia, "according to a superstition common among Central African tribes, unless the slayers were purified from blood-guiltiness they would become mad. On the night of return no warrior might sleep in his own hut, but lay in the open *nsaka* in the village. The next day, after bathing in the stream and being anointed with lustral medicine by the doctor, he could return to his own hearth, and resume intercourse with his wife."[2] In all such cases the madness of the slayer is probably attributed to the ghost of the slain, which has taken possession of him.

The custom of secluding and purifying homicides is intended to protect them against the angry spirits of the slain, which are thought to madden their slayers.

That the Greek practice of secluding and purifying a homicide was essentially an exorcism, in other words, that its aim was to ban the dangerous ghost of his victim, is rendered practically certain by the similar rites of seclusion and purification which among many savage tribes have to be observed by victorious warriors with the avowed intention of securing them against the spirits of the men whom they have slain in battle. These rites I have illustrated elsewhere,[3] but a few cases may be quoted here by way of example. Thus among the Basutos "ablution is especially performed on return from battle. It is absolutely necessary that the warriors should rid themselves, as soon as possible, of the blood they have shed, or the shades of their victims would pursue them incessantly, and disturb their slumbers. They go in a procession, and in full armour, to the nearest stream. At the moment they enter the water a diviner, placed higher up, throws some purifying substances into the current."[4] According to another account of the Basuto custom, "warriors

[1] Lieut.-Colonel J. Shakespear, "The Kuki-Lushai clans," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxix. (1909) p. 380; *id.*, *The Lushei Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), pp. 78 *sq.*

[2] J. H. West Sheane, "Wemba Warpaths," *Journal of the African Society*, No. 41 (October, 1911), pp. 31 *sq.*

[3] *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 165 *sqq.*

[4] Rev. E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), p. 258.

who have killed an enemy are purified. The chief has to wash them, sacrificing an ox in the presence of the whole army. They are also anointed with the gall of the animal, which prevents the ghost of the enemy from pursuing them any farther."[1] Among the Thonga, a Bantu tribe of South Africa, about Delagoa Bay, "to have killed an enemy on the battle-field entails an immense glory for the slayers; but that glory is fraught with great danger. They have killed. . . . So they are exposed to the mysterious and deadly influence of the *nuru* and must consequently undergo a medical treatment. What is the *nuru*? *Nuru*, the spirit of the slain which tries to take its revenge on the slayer. It haunts him and may drive him into insanity: his eyes swell, protrude and become inflamed. He will lose his head, be attacked by giddiness (*ndzululwan*) and the thirst for blood may lead him to fall upon members of his own family and to stab them with his assagay. To prevent such misfortunes, a special medication is required: the slayers must *lurulula tiyimpi ta bu*, take away the *nuru* of their sanguinary expedition. . . . In what consists this treatment? The slayers must remain for some days at the capital. They are taboo. They put on old clothes, eat with special spoons, because their hands are 'hot,' and off special plates (*mireko*) and broken pots. They are forbidden to drink water. Their food must be cold. The chief kills oxen for them; but if the meat were hot it would make them swell internally 'because they are hot themselves, they are defiled (*ba na nsila*).' If they eat hot food, the defilement would enter into them. 'They are black (*ntima*). This black must be removed.' During all this time sexual relations are absolutely forbidden to them. They must not go home, to their wives. In former times the Ba-Ronga used to tattoo them with special marks from one eyebrow to the other. Dreadful medicines were inoculated in the incisions, and there remained pimples 'which gave them the appearance of a buffalo when it frowns.' After some days a medicine-man comes to purify them, 'to remove their black.' There seem to be various means of doing it, according to Mankhelu. Seeds of all kinds are put into a

[1] Father Porte, "Les Réminiscences d'un missionnaire du Basutoland," *Les Missions catholiques*, xxviii. (1896) p. 371.

broken pot and roasted, together with drugs and *psanyi*[1] of a goat. The slayers inhale the smoke which emanates from the pot. They put their hands into the mixture and rub their limbs with it, especially the joints. . . . Insanity threatening those who shed blood might begin early. So, already on the battle-field, just after their deed, warriors are given a preventive dose of the medicine by those who have killed on previous occasions. . . . The period of seclusion having been concluded by the final purification, all the implements used by the slayers during these days, and their old garments, are tied together and hung by a string to a tree, at some distance from the capital, where they are left to rot."[2]

With some savages temporary insanity seems to be really caused by the sight or even thought of blood.

The accounts of the madness which is apt to befall slayers seem too numerous and too consistent to be dismissed as pure fictions of the savage imagination. However we may reject the native explanation of such fits of frenzy, the reports point to a real berserker fury or unbridled thirst for blood which comes over savages when they are excited by combat, and which may prove dangerous to friends as well as to foes. The question is one on which students of mental disease might perhaps throw light. Meantime it deserves to be noticed that even the people who have staid at home and have taken no share in the bloody work are liable to fall into a state of frenzy when they hear the war-whoops which proclaim the approach of the victorious warriors with their ghastly trophies. Thus we are told that among the Bare'e-speaking Toradjas of Central Celebes, when these notes of triumph were heard in the distance the whole population of the village would turn out to meet and welcome the returning braves. At the mere sound some of those who had remained at home, especially women, would be seized with a frenzy, and rushing forth would bite the severed heads of the slain foes, and they were not to be brought to their senses till they had drunk palm wine or water out of the skulls. If the warriors returned empty-handed, these

[1] *Psanyi* is half-digested grass found in the stomachs of sacrificed goats (H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, ii. 569).

[2] Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchâtel, 1912–1913), i. 453-455. I have omitted some of the Thonga words which Mr. Junod inserts in the text.

furies would fall upon them and bite their arms. There was a regular expression for this state of temporary insanity excited by the sight or even the thought of human blood; it was called *merata lamoanja* or *merata raoa*, "the spirit is come over them," by which was probably meant that the madness was caused by the ghosts of the slaughtered foes. When any of the warriors themselves suffered from this paroxysm of frenzy, they were healed by eating a piece of the brains or licking the blood of the slain.[1]

Means taken by manslayers in Africa to rid themselves of the ghosts of their victims.

Among the Bantu tribes of Kavirondo, in British East Africa, when a man has killed an enemy in warfare he shaves his head on his return home, and his friends rub a medicine, which generally consists of cow's dung, over his body to prevent the spirit of the slain man from troubling him.[2] Here cow's dung serves these negroes as a detergent of the ghost, just as pig's blood served the ancient Greeks. Among the Wawanga, about Mount Elgon in British East Africa, "a man returning from a raid, on which he has killed one of the enemy, may not enter his hut until he has taken cow-dung and rubbed it on the cheeks of the women and children of the village and purified himself by the sacrifice of a goat, a strip of skin from the forehead of which he wears round the right wrist during the four following nights."[3] With the Ja-Luo of Kavirondo the custom is somewhat different. Three days after his return from the fight the warrior shaves his head. But before he may enter his village he has to hang a live fowl, head uppermost, round his neck; then the bird is decapitated and its head left hanging round his neck. Soon after his return a feast is made for the slain man, in order that his ghost may not haunt his slayer.[4] In some of these cases the slayer shaves his head, precisely as the matricide Orestes is said to have shorn his hair when he came to his senses.[5] From this Greek tradition we may infer with some probability that the hair of Greek homicides,

[1] N. Adriani en Alb. C. Kruijt, *De Bare'e-sprekende Toradja's van Midden-Celebes*, i. (Batavia, 1912) p. 239.

[2] Sir H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1902), ii. 743 *sq.*; C. W. Hobley, *Eastern Uganda* (London, 1902), p. 20.

[3] Extract from a type-written account of the tribes of Mount Elgon, by the Hon. Kenneth R. Dundas, which the author kindly sent to me.

[4] Sir H. Johnston, *op. cit.* ii. 794; C. W. Hobley, *op. cit.* p. 31.

[5] Pausanias, viii. 34. 3; compare Strabo, xii. 2. 3, p. 535.

like that of these African warriors, was regularly cropped as one way of ridding them of the ghostly infection. Among the Ba-Yaka, a Bantu people of the Congo Free State, "a man who has been killed in battle is supposed to send his soul to avenge his death on the person of the man who killed him; the latter, however, can escape the vengeance of the dead by wearing the red tail-feathers of the parrot in his hair, and painting his forehead red."[1] Perhaps, as I have suggested elsewhere, this costume is intended to disguise the slayer from his victim's ghost.[2] Among the Natchez Indians of North America young braves who had taken their first scalps were obliged to observe certain rules of abstinence for six months. They might not sleep with their wives nor eat flesh; their only food was fish and hasty-pudding. If they broke these rules they believed that the soul of the man they had killed would work their death by magic.[3]

Precautions taken by the Natchez Indians.

Ghosts of the slain dreaded by the Kai of German New Guinea.

The Kai of German New Guinea stand in great fear of the ghosts of the men whom they have slain in war. On their way back from the field of battle or the scene of massacre they hurry in order to be safe at home or in the shelter of a friendly village before nightfall; for all night long the spirits of the dead are believed to dog the footsteps of their slayers, in the hope of coming up with them and recovering the lost portions of their souls which adhere with the clots of their blood to the spears and clubs that dealt them the death-blow. Only so can these poor restless ghosts find rest and peace. Hence the slayers are careful not to bring back the blood-stained weapons with them into the village; for that would be the first place where the ghosts would look for them. They hide them, therefore, in the forest at a safe distance from the village, where the ghosts can never find them; and when the spirits are weary of the fruitless search, they go away back to their dead bodies lying, it may be, among the blackened ruins of their

1 E. Torday and T. A. Joyce, "Notes on the Ethnography of the Ba-Yaka," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906) pp. 50 *sq*.

2 J. G. Frazer, "Folk-lore in the Old Testament," in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor* (Oxford, 1907), p. 108.

3 "Relation des Natchez," *Recueil de Voyages au Nord*, ix. 24 (Amsterdam, 1737); *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, Nouvelle Édition, vii. (Paris, 1781) p. 26; Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), vi. 186 *sq*.

desolated home. Then the victors come forth, and taking up the weapons from their hiding-places, wash them clean of blood and bring them back to the village.[1] But "as more or less of the soul-stuff of their slain foes always sticks to the victors, none of their people may touch them after their return to the village. They are strictly shunned by their friends for several days. People go shyly out of their way. If any one in the village gets a pain in his stomach, it is assumed that he has sat down on the place of one of the warriors. If somebody complains of toothache, he must have eaten a fruit which had been touched by one of the combatants. All the leavings of the men's food must be most carefully put out of the way, lest a pig should get at them, for that would be the death of the animal. Therefore the remains of their meals are burnt or buried. The warriors themselves cannot suffer much from the soul-stuff of the foes, because they treat themselves with the disinfecting sap of a creeper. But even so they are not secure against all the dangers that threaten them from this quarter."[2]

Customs observed by manslayers in British New Guinea.

Among the tribes at the mouth of the Wanigela River, in British New Guinea, "a man who has taken life is considered to be impure until he has undergone certain ceremonies: as soon as possible after the deed he cleanses himself and his weapon. This satisfactorily accomplished, he repairs to his village and seats himself on the logs of sacrificial staging. No one approaches him or takes any notice whatever of him. A house is prepared for him which is put in charge of two or three small boys as servants. He may eat only toasted bananas, and only the centre portion of them—the ends being thrown away. On the third day of his seclusion a small feast is prepared by his friends, who also fashion some new perineal bands for him. This is called *ivi poro*. The next day the man dons all his best ornaments and badges for taking life, and sallies forth fully armed and parades the village. The next day a hunt is organised, and a kangaroo selected from the game captured. It is cut open and the spleen and liver rubbed over the back of the man. He then walks solemnly down to the

[1] Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der Kaileute," in R. Neuhauss's *Deutsch Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, 1911), iii. 147 *sq.*

[2] Ch. Keysser, *op. cit.* p. 132.

nearest water, and standing straddle-legs in it washes himself. All young untried warriors swim between his legs. This is supposed to impart his courage and strength to them. The following day, at early dawn, he dashes out of his house, fully armed, and calls aloud the name of his victim. Having satisfied himself that he has thoroughly scared the ghost of the dead man, he returns to his house. The beating of flooring boards and the lighting of fires is also a certain method of scaring the ghost. A day later his purification is finished. He can then enter his wife's house."[1] In this last case the true nature of such so-called purifications is clearly manifest: they are in fact rites of exorcism observed for the purpose of banning a dangerous spirit.

Customs observed by murderers among the Omaha Indians.

Amongst the Omaha Indians of North America a murderer whose life was spared by the kinsmen of his victim had to observe certain stringent rules for a period which varied from two to four years. He must walk barefoot, and he might eat no warm food, nor raise his voice, nor look around. He had to pull his robe around him and to keep it tied at the neck, even in warm weather; he might not let it hang loose or fly open. He might not move his hands about, but had to keep them close to his body. He might not comb his hair, nor might it be blown about by the wind. No one would eat with him, and only one of his kindred was allowed to remain with him in his tent. When the tribe went hunting, he was obliged to pitch his tent about a quarter of a mile from the rest of the people, "lest the ghost of his victim should raise a high wind which might cause damage."[2] The reason here alleged for banishing the murderer from the camp of the hunters gives the clue to all the other restrictions laid on him: he was haunted by the ghost and therefore dangerous; hence people kept aloof from him, just as they are said to have done from the ghost-ridden Orestes.

Among the Chinook Indians of Oregon and Washington, "when a person has been killed, an old man who has a

[1] R. E. Guise, "On the Tribes inhabiting the mouth of the Wanigela River, New Guinea," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxviii. (1899) pp. 213 *sq*.

[2] Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1884), p. 369.

guardian spirit is asked to work over the murderer. The old man takes coal and mixes it with grease. He puts it on to the face of the murderer. He gives him a head ring of cedar bark. Cedar bark is also tied around his ankles and knees and around his wrists. For five days he does not drink water. He does not sleep, and does not lie down. He always stands. At night he walks about and whistles on bone whistles. He always says '*ä ä ä*.' For five days he does not wash his face. Then on the next morning the old man washes his face. He takes off that coal. He removes the black paint from his face. He puts red paint on his face. A little coal is mixed with the red paint. The old man puts this again on to his face. Sometimes this is done by an old man, sometimes by an old woman. The cedar bark which was tied to his legs and arms is taken off and buckskin straps are tied around his arms and his legs. Now, after five days he is given water. He is given a bucket, out of which he drinks. Now food is roasted for him, until it is burned. When it is burned black it is given to him. He eats standing. He takes five mouthsful, and no more. After thirty days he is painted with new red paint. Good red paint is taken. Now he carries his head ring and his bucket to a spruce tree and hangs it on top of the tree. Then the tree will dry up. People never eat in company of a murderer. He never eats sitting, but always standing. When he sits down to rest he kneels on one leg. The murderer never looks at a child and must not see people while they are eating."[1] All these measures are probably intended to rid the murderer of the clinging ghost of his victim, and to keep him in quarantine till the riddance has been effected.

Ceremonies observed by homicides among the Chinook Indians.

While the spirit of a murdered man is thus feared by everybody, it is natural that it should be specially dreaded by those against whom for any reason he may be conceived to bear a grudge. For example, among the Yabim of German New Guinea, when the relations of a murdered man have accepted a bloodwit instead of avenging his death, they must allow the family of the victim to mark them with chalk on the brow. Were this

Ghosts of slain kinsfolk, fellow-townsmen, and fellow-clansfolk especially dreaded.

[1] Franz Boas, *Chinook Texts* (Washington, 1894), p. 258.

not done, the ghost of their dead kinsman might come and trouble them for not doing their duty by him; he might drive away their pigs or loosen their teeth.[1] The ghosts of murdered kinsfolk and neighbours are naturally more formidable than those of foreigners and strangers; for their wrath is hotter and they have more opportunities of wreaking their anger on the hard-hearted friends who either did them to death with their own hands or left their blood unavenged. Indeed some people only fear the wraiths of such persons, and regard with indifference all other ghosts, let them mow and gibber as much as they like. Thus among the Boloki of the Upper Congo "a homicide is not afraid of the spirit of the man he has killed when the slain man belongs to any of the neighbouring towns, as disembodied spirits travel in a very limited area only; but when he kills a man belonging to his own town he is filled with fear lest the spirit shall do him some harm. There are no special rites that he can observe to free himself from these fears, but he mourns for the slain man as though he were a member of his own family. He neglects his personal appearance, shaves his head, fasts for a certain period, and laments with much weeping."[2] Again, a Kikuyu man does not incur ceremonial pollution (*thahu*) by the slaughter of a man of another tribe, nor even of his own tribe, provided his victim belongs to another clan; but if the slain man is a member of the same clan as his slayer, the case is grave indeed. However, it is possible by means of a ceremony to bind over the ghost to keep the peace. For this purpose the murderer and the oldest surviving brother of his victim are seated facing each other on two trunks of banana trees; here they are solemnly fed by two elders with vegetable food of all kinds, which has been provided for the purpose by their mothers and sprinkled with the contents of the stomach of a sacrificed sheep. Next day the elders proceed to the sacred

[1] K. Vetter, "Über papuanische Rechtsverhältnisse, wie solche namentlich bei den Jabim beobachtet wurden," *Nachrichten über Kaiser Wilhelms-Land und den Bismarck-Archipel*, 1897, p. 99; B. Hagen, *Unter den Papuas* (Wiesbaden, 1899), p. 254.

[2] Rev. J. H. Weeks, *Among Congo Cannibals* (London, 1913), p. 268; compare *id.*, "Anthropological Notes on the Bangala of the Upper Congo River," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) p. 373.

fig-tree (*mugumo*), which plays a great part in the religious rites of the Akikuyu. There they sacrifice a pig and deposit some of the fat, the intestines, and the more important bones at the foot of the tree, while they themselves feast on the more palatable parts of the animal. They think that the ghost of the murdered man will visit the tree that very night in the outward shape of a wild cat and consume the meat, and that this offering will prevent him from returning to the village and troubling the inhabitants.[1]

Ghosts of the slain dreaded by the Toradjas of Central Celebes.

The Bare'e-speaking Toradjas of Central Celebes are greatly concerned about the souls of men who have been slain in battle. They appear to think that men who have been killed in war instead of dying by disease have not exhausted their vital energy and that therefore their departed spirits are more powerful than the common ruck of ghosts; and as on account of the unnatural manner of their death they cannot be admitted into the land of souls they continue to prowl about the earth, furious with the foes who have cut them off untimely in the prime of manhood, and demanding of their friends that they shall wage war on the enemy and send forth an expedition every year to kill some of them. If the survivors pay no heed to this demand of the bloodthirsty ghosts, they themselves are exposed to the vengeance of these angry spirits, who pay out their undutiful friends and relatives by visiting them with sickness and death. Hence with the Toradjas war is a sacred duty in which every member of the community is bound to bear a part; even women and children, who cannot wage real war, must wage mimic warfare at home by hacking with bamboo swords at an old skull of the enemy, while with their shrill voices they utter the war-whoop.[2] Thus among these people, as among many more tribes of savages, a belief in the immortality of

[1] C. W. Hobley, "Kikuyu Customs and Beliefs," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xl. (1910) pp. 438 *sq*. As to the sanctity of the fig-tree (*mugumu*) among the Akikuyu, see Mervyn W. H. Beech, "The sacred fig-tree of the A-kikuyu of East Africa," *Man*, xiii. (1913) pp. 4-6. Mr. Beech traces the reverence for the tree to the white milky sap which exudes from it when an incision is made in the bark. This appears to have suggested to the savages the idea that the tree is a great source of fertility to men and women, to cattle, sheep, and goats.

[2] N. Adriani en Alb. C. Kruijt, *De Bare'e-sprekende Toradja's van Midden-Celebes*, i. (Batavia, 1912) pp. 285, 290 *sq*. In recent years the wars between the tribes have been suppressed by the Dutch Government.

the soul has been one of the most fruitful causes of bloodshed by keeping up a perpetual state of war between neighbouring communities, who dare not make peace with each other for fear of mortally offending the spirits of the dead.[1]

Ghosts of all who have died violent deaths are dangerous. How the Karens propitiate such ghosts.

But, whether friends or foes, the ghosts of all who have died a violent death are in a sense a public danger; for their temper is naturally soured and they are apt to fall foul of the first person they meet without nicely discriminating between the innocent and the guilty. The Karens of Burma, for example, think that the spirits of all such persons go neither to the upper regions of bliss nor to the nether world of woe, but linger on earth and wander about invisible. They make men sick to death by stealing their souls. Accordingly these vampire-like beings are exceedingly dreaded by the people, who seek to appease their anger and repel their cruel assaults by propitiatory offerings and the most earnest prayers and supplications.[2] They put red, yellow, and white rice in a basket and leave it in the forest, saying: "Ghosts of such as died by falling from a tree, ghosts of such as died of hunger or thirst, ghosts of such as died by the tiger's tooth or the serpent's fang, ghosts of the murdered dead, ghosts of such as died of small-pox or cholera, ghosts of dead lepers, O ill-treat us not, seize not upon our persons, do us no harm. O stay here in this wood. We will bring hither red rice, yellow rice, and white rice for your subsistence."[3]

The angry ghosts of the slain are sometimes forcibly driven away with noise and clamour.

However, it is not always by fair words and propitiatory offerings that the community attempts to rid itself of these invisible but dangerous intruders. People sometimes resort to more forcible measures. "Once," says a traveller among the Indians of North America, "on approaching in the night a village of Ottawas, I found all the inhabitants in confusion: they were all busily engaged in raising noises of the loudest and most inharmonious kind. Upon inquiry, I found that a battle had been lately fought between the Ottawas and the Kickapoos, and that the object of all this noise was to prevent the ghosts of the departed combatants

[1] Compare *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, i. (London, 1913) pp. 136 *sq.*, 278 *sq.*, 468 *sq.*

[2] Rev. E. B. Cross, "On the Karens," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, iv. No. 2 (New York, 1854), pp. 312 *sq.*

[3] Bringaud, "Les Karins de la Birmanie," *Les Missions catholiques*, xx. (1888) p. 208.

from entering the village."[1] Again, after the North American Indians had burned and tortured a prisoner to death, they used to run through the village, beating the walls, the furniture, and the roofs of the huts with sticks and yelling at the pitch of their voices to drive away the angry ghost of the victim, lest he should seek to avenge the injuries done to his scorched and mutilated body.[2] Similarly among the Papuans of Doreh in Dutch New Guinea, when a murder has been committed in the village, the inhabitants assemble for several evenings successively and shriek and shout to frighten away the ghost, in case he should attempt to come back.[3] The Yabim, a tribe in German New Guinea, believe that "the dead can both help and harm, but the fear of their harmful influence is predominant. Especially the people are of opinion that the ghost of a slain man haunts his murderer and brings misfortune on him. Hence it is necessary to drive away the ghost with shrieks and the beating of drums. The model of a canoe laden with taro and tobacco is got ready to facilitate his departure."[4] So when the Bukaua of German New Guinea have won a victory over their foes and have returned home, they kindle a fire in the middle of the village and hurl blazing brands in the direction of the battle-field, while at the same time they make an ear-splitting din, to keep at bay the angry spirits of the slain.[5] When the cannibal Melanesians of the Bismarck Archipelago have eaten a human body, they shout, blow horns, shake spears, and beat the bushes for the purpose of driving away the ghost of the man or woman whose flesh has just furnished the banquet.[6] The Fijians used to bury the sick and aged alive,

[1] W. H. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Sources of St. Peter's River* (London, 1825), i. 109, quoting Mr. Barron.

[2] Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1744), vi. 77, 122 *sq.*; J. F. Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages amériquains* (Paris, 1724), ii. 279.

[3] H. von Rosenberg, *Der malayische Archipel* (Leipsic, 1878), p. 461. Compare J. L. van Hasselt, "Die Papuastämme an der Geelvinkbai (Neuguinea)," *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, ix. (1891) p. 101.

[4] K. Vetter, "Über papuanische Rechtsverhältnisse," in *Nachrichten über Kaiser Wilhelms-Land und den Bismarck-Archipel* (1897), p. 94; B. Hagen, *Unter den Papuas* (Wiesbaden, 1899), p. 266.

[5] Stefan Lehner, "Bukaua," in R. Neuhauss's *Deutsch Neu-Guinea* (Berlin, 1911), iii. 444.

[6] George Brown, D.D., *Melanesians and Polynesians* (London, 1910), pp. 142, 145.

and having done so they always made a great uproar with bamboos, shell-trumpets, and so forth in order to scare away the spirits of the buried people and prevent them from returning to their homes; and by way of removing any temptation to hover about their former abodes they dismantled the houses of the dead and hung them with everything that in their eyes seemed most repulsive.[1] Among the Angoni, a Zulu tribe settled to the north of the Zambesi, warriors who have slain foes on an expedition smear their bodies and faces with ashes, and hang garments of their victims on their persons. This costume they wear for three days after their return, and rising at break of day they run through the village uttering frightful yells to banish the ghosts of the slain, which otherwise might bring sickness and misfortune on the people.[2]

Precautions taken against the ghosts of executed criminals and other dangerous persons.

In Travancore the spirits of men who have died a violent death by drowning, hanging, or other means are supposed to become demons, wandering about to inflict injury in various ways upon mankind. Especially the ghosts of murderers who have been hanged are believed to haunt the place of execution and its neighbourhood. To prevent this it used to be customary to cut off the criminal's heels with a sword or to hamstring him as he was turned off.[3] The intention of thus mutilating the body was no doubt to prevent the ghost from walking. How could he walk if he were hamstrung or had no heels? With precisely the same intention it has been customary with some peoples to maim in various ways the dead bodies not only of executed criminals but of other persons; for all ghosts are more or less dreaded. When any bad man died, the Esquimaux of Bering Strait used in the old days to cut the sinews of his arms and legs "in order to prevent the shade from returning to the body and causing it to walk at night as a ghoul."[4] The Omaha

[1] John Jackson, in J. E. Erskine's *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific* (London, 1853), p. 477.

[2] C. Wiese, "Beitrage zur Geschichte der Zulu im Norden des Zambesi," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xxxii. (1900) pp. 197 *sq.*

[3] Rev. Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity, a Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People* (London, 1871), pp. 203 *sq.*

[4] E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, Part i. (Washington, 1899) p. 423.

Indians said that when a man was killed by lightning he should be buried face downwards, and that the soles of his feet should be slit; for if this were not done, his ghost would walk.[1] The Herero of South Africa think that the ghosts of bad people appear and are just as mischievous as in life; for they rob, steal, and seduce women and girls, sometimes getting them with child. To prevent the dead from playing these pranks the Herero used to cut through the backbone of the corpse, tie it up in a bunch, and sew it into an ox-hide.[2] A simple way of disabling a dangerous ghost is to dig up his body and decapitate it. This is done by West African negroes and also by the Armenians; to make assurance doubly sure the Armenians not only cut off the head but smash it or stick a needle into it or into the dead man's heart.[3]

Precautions taken in India against the ghosts of women who die in pregnancy, childbed, or soon after it.

The Hindoos of the Punjaub believe that if a mother dies within thirteen days of her delivery, she will return in the guise of a malignant spirit to torment her husband and family. To prevent this some people drive nails through her head and eyes, while others also knock nails on either side of the door of the house.[4] A gentler way of attaining the same end is to put a nail or a piece of iron in the clothes of the poor dead mother,[5] or to knock nails into the earth round the places where she died, and where her dead body was washed and cremated. Some people put pepper in the eyes of the corpse to prevent the ghost from seeing her way back to the house.[6] In Bilaspore, if a mother dies leaving very young children, they tie her hands and feet before burial to prevent her from getting up by

[1] Rev. J. Owen Dorsey, "A Study of Siouan Cults," *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1894), p. 420.

[2] Dr. P. H. Brincker, "Character, Sitten, und Gebräuche speciell der Bantu Deutsch-Südwestafrikas," *Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalischen Sprachen zu Berlin*, iii. dritte Abteilung (1900), pp. 89 *sq*.

[3] Rev. R. H. Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (London, 1904), p. 220; M. Abeghian, *Der armenische Volksglaube* (Leipsic, 1899), p. 11.

[4] H. A. Rose, "Hindu Birth Observances in the Punjab," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907) pp. 225 *sq*.

[5] G. F. D' Penha, "Superstitions and Customs in Salsette," *The Indian Antiquary*, xxviii. (1899) p. 115.

[6] *Census of India, 1911*, vol. xiv. *Punjab*, Part I. (Lahore, 1912) p. 303. As to these perturbed and perturbing spirits in India, see further W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 269-274. They are called *churel*.

night and going to see her orphaned little ones.[1] The Oraons of Bengal are firmly convinced that any woman who dies in pregnancy or childbirth becomes an evil and dangerous spirit (*bhut*), who, if steps are not taken to keep her off, will come back and tickle to death those whom she loved best in life. "To prevent her, therefore, from coming back, they carry her body as far away as they can, but no woman will accompany her to her last resting-place lest similar misfortune should happen to her. Arrived at the burial-place, they break the feet above the ankle, twist them round, bringing the heels in front, and then drive long thorns into them. They bury her very deep with her face downwards, and with her they bury the bones of a donkey, and pronounce the *anathema*, 'If you come home may you turn into a donkey'; the roots of a palm-tree are also buried with her; and they say, 'May you come home only when the leaves of the palm-tree wither,' and when they retire they spread mustard seeds all along the road saying, 'When you try to come home pick up all these.' They then feel pretty safe at home from her nocturnal visits, but woe to the man who passes at night near the place where she has been buried. She will pounce upon him, twist his neck, and leave him senseless on the ground, until brought to by the incantations of a sorcerer."[2] Among the Lushais of Assam, when a woman died in childbed, the relatives offer a sacrifice to her departed soul, "but the rest of that village treat the day as a holiday and put a small green branch on the wall of each house on the outside near the doorpost to keep out the spirit of the dead woman."[3]

Precautions taken in Burma against the ghosts of women who die in pregnancy or child-bed.

Among the Shans of Burma, when a woman dies with an unborn child, it is believed that her spirit turns into a malignant ghost, "who may return to haunt her husband's home and torment him, unless precautions are taken to keep her away. To begin with, her unborn child is removed by an operation; then mother and child are wrapped in separate mats and buried without coffins. If this be not done, the same

[1] E. M. Gordon, *Indian Folk Tales* (London, 1908), p. 47.

[2] Rev. P. Dehon, S.J., "Religion and Customs of the Uraons," *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. i. No. 9 (Calcutta, 1906), pp. 139 *sq.*

[3] Lieut.-Colonel H. W. G. Cole, "The Lushais," in *Census of India, 1911*, vol. iii. *Assam*, Part I. (Shillong, 1912) p. 140.

misfortune may occur again to the woman, in her future life, and the widower will suffer from the attacks of the ghost. When the bodies are being removed from the house, part of the mat wall in the side of the house is taken down, and the dead woman and her baby are lowered to the ground through the aperture. The hole through which the bodies have passed is immediately filled with new mats, so that the ghost may not know how to return."[1] The Kachins of Burma are so afraid of the ghosts of women dying in childbed that no sooner has such a death taken place than the husband, the children, and almost all the people in the house take to flight lest the ghost should bite them. They bandage the eyes of the dead woman with her own hair to prevent her from seeing anything; they wrap the corpse in a mat and carry it out of the house not by the ordinary door, but by an opening made for the purpose either in the wall or in the floor of the room where she breathed her last. Then they convey the body to a deep ravine where foot of man seldom penetrates, and there, having heaped her clothes, her jewellery, and all her belongings over her, they set fire to the pile and reduce the whole to ashes. "Thus they destroy all the property of the unfortunate woman in order that her soul may not think of coming to fetch it afterwards and to bite the people in the attempt." When this has been done, the officiating priest scatters some burnt grain of a climbing plant (*shămien*), inserts in the earth the pestle which the dead woman used to husk the rice, and winds up the exorcism by cursing and railing at her ghost, saying: "Wait to come back to us till this grain sprouts and this pestle blossoms, till the fern bears fruit, and the cocks lay eggs." The house in which the woman died is generally pulled down, and the timber may only be used as firewood or to build small hovels in the fields. Till a new house can be built for them, the widower and the orphans receive the hospitality of their nearest relatives, a father or a brother; their other friends would not dare to receive them from fear of the ghost.

[1] Mrs. Leslie Milne, *Shans at Home* (London, 1910), p. 96. The custom of carrying the dead out of the house by a special opening, which is then blocked up to prevent the return of the ghost, has been observed by many peoples in many parts of the world. For examples see *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, i. 452 *sqq*.

Occasionally the dead mother's jewels are spared from the fire and given away to some poor old crones, who do not trouble their heads about ghosts. If the medicine-man who attended the woman in life and officiated at the funeral is old, he may consent to accept the jewels as the fee for his services; but in that case no sooner has he got home than he puts the jewels in the henhouse. If the hens remain quiet, it is a good omen and he can keep the trinkets with an easy mind; but if the fowl flutter and cackle, it is a sign that the ghost is sticking to the jewels, and in a fright he restores them to the family. The old man or old woman into whose hands the trinkets of the dead woman thus sometimes fall cannot dispose of them to other members of the tribe; for nobody who knows where the things come from would be so rash as to buy them. However, they may find purchasers among the Shans or the Chinese, who do not fear Kachin ghosts.[1]

Precautions taken in the Indian Archipelago against the ghosts of women who die in childbed.

The ghosts of women who die in childbed are much dreaded in the Indian Archipelago; it is supposed that they appear in the form of birds with long claws and are exceedingly dangerous to their husbands and also to pregnant women. A common way of guarding against them is to put an egg under each armpit of the corpse, to press the arms close against the body, and to stick needles in the palms of the hands. The people believe that the ghost of the dead woman will be unable to fly and attack people; for she will not spread out her arms for fear of letting the eggs fall, and she will not clutch anybody for fear of driving the needles deeper into her palms. Sometimes by way of additional precaution another egg is placed under her chin, thorns are thrust into the joints of her fingers and toes, her mouth is stopped with ashes, and her hands, feet, and hair are nailed to the coffin.[2] Some Sea Dyaks of Borneo sow the ground

[1] Ch. Gilhodes, "Naissance et Enfance chez les Katchins (Birmanie)," *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) pp. 872 *sq.*

[2] Van Schmidt, "Aanteekeningen nopens de zeden, etc., der bevolking van de eilanden Saparoea, etc.," *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlands Indie*, v. Tweede Deel (Batavia, 1843), pp. 528 *sqq.*; G. Heijmering, "Zeden en gewoonten op het eiland Timor," *Tijdschrift voor Neerlands Indië*, vii. Negende Aflevering (Batavia, 1845), pp. 278 *sq.*, note; B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes* (The Hague, 1875), p. 97; W. E. Maxwell, "Folk-lore of the Malays," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 7

Attempts to lame and otherwise disable ghosts.

near cemeteries with bits of sticks to imitate caltrops, in order that the feet of any ghosts who walk over them may be lamed.[1] The Besisi of the Malay Peninsula bury their dead in the ground and let fall knives on the grave to prevent the ghost from getting up out of it.[2] The Tunguses of Turukhansk on the contrary put their dead up in trees, and then lop off all the branches to prevent the ghost from scrambling down and giving them chase.[3] The Herbert River natives in Queensland used to cut holes in the stomach, shoulders, and lungs of their dead and fill the holes with stones, in order that, weighed down with this ballast, the ghost might not stray far afield; to limit his range still further they commonly broke his legs.[4] Other Australian blacks put hot coals in the ears of their departed brother; this keeps the ghost in the body for a time, and allows the relations to get a good start away from him. Also they bark the trees in a circle round the spot, so that when the ghost does get out and makes after them, he wanders round and round in a circle, always returning to the place from which he started.[5] The ancient Hindoos put fetters on the feet of their dead that they might not return to the land of the living.[6] The Tinneh Indians of Alaska grease the hands of a corpse, so that when his ghost grabs at people's souls to carry them

(June 1881), p. 28; W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), p. 325; J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), p. 81; B. C. A. J. van Dinter, "Eenige geographische en ethnographische aanteekeningen betreffende het eiland Siaoe," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde*, xli. (1899) p. 381; A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnografische aanteekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoe en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xliv. (Rotterdam, 1900) p. 218; *id.*, *Het Animisme in den Indischen Archipel* (The Hague, 1906), p. 252; G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Leyden, 1893), p. 559; J. H. Meerwaldt, "Gebruiken der Bataks in het maatschappelijk leven," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlix. (1905) p. 113. The common name for these dreaded ghosts is *pontianak*. For a full account of them see A. C. Kruijt, *Het Animisme in den Indischen Archipel*, pp. 245 *sqq.*

[1] J. Perham, "Sea Dyak Religion," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 14 (Singapore, 1885), pp. 291 *sq.*

[2] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), ii. 109.

[3] T. de Pauly, *Description ethnographique des peuples de la Russie* (St. Petersburg, 1862), *Peuples ouralo-altaiques*, p. 71.

[4] A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London, 1904), p. 474.

[5] A. W. Howitt, *op. cit.* p. 473.

[6] H. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben* (Berlin, 1879), p. 402.

off with him they slip through his greasy fingers and escape.[1]

The way home barricaded against ghosts.

Some peoples bar the road from the grave to prevent the ghost from following them. The Tunguses make the barrier of snow or trees.[2] Amongst the Mangars, one of the fighting tribes of Nepal, "when the mourners return home, one of their party goes ahead and makes a barricade of thorn bushes across the road midway between the grave and the house of the deceased. On the top of the thorns he puts a big stone on which he takes his stand, holding a pot of burning incense in his left hand and some woollen thread in his right. One by one the mourners step on the stone and pass through the smoke of the incense to the other side of the thorny barrier. As they pass, each takes a piece of thread from the man who holds the incense and ties it round his neck. The object of this curious ceremony is to prevent the spirit of the dead man from coming home with the mourners and establishing itself in its old haunts. Conceived of as a miniature man, it is believed to be unable to make its way on foot through the thorns, while the smell of the incense, to which all spirits are highly sensitive, prevents it from surmounting this obstacle on the shoulders of one of the mourners."[3] The Chins of Burma burn their dead and collect the bones in an earthen pot. Afterwards, at a convenient season, the pot containing the bones is carried away to the ancestral burial-place, which is generally situated in the depth of the jungle. "When the people convey the pot of bones to the cemetery, they take with them some cotton-yarn, and whenever they come to any stream or other water, they stretch a thread across, whereby the spirit of the deceased, who accompanies them, may get across it too. When they have duly deposited the bones and food for the spirit in the cemetery they return home,

[1] Rev. Father Julius Jetté, "On the Superstitions of the Ten'a Indians," *Anthropos*, vi. (1911) p. 707.

[2] T. de Pauly, *Description ethnographique des peuples de la Russie* (St. Petersburg, 1862), *Peuples ouralo-altaïques*, p. 71.

[3] (Sir) H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Ethnographic Glossary*, ii. (Calcutta, 1891) pp. 75 *sq.* Compare E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India*, ii. (Allahabad, 1884) p. 832; W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), ii. 57.

after bidding the spirit to remain there, and not to follow them back to the village. At the same time they block the way by which they return by putting a bamboo across the path."[1] Thus the mourners make the way to the grave as easy as possible for the ghost, but obstruct the way by which he might return from it.

Devices of the North American Indians to keep ghosts at bay.

The Algonquin Indians, not content with beating the walls of their huts to drive away the ghost, stretched nets round them in order to catch the spirit in the meshes, if he attempted to enter the house. Others made stinks to keep him off.[2] The Ojebways also resorted to a number of devices for warding off the spirits of the dead. These have been described as follows by a writer who was himself an Ojebway: "If the deceased was a husband, it is often the custom for the widow, after the burial is over, to spring or leap over the grave, and then run zigzag behind the trees, as if she were fleeing from some one. This is called running away from the spirit of her husband, that it may not haunt her. In the evening of the day on which the burial has taken place, when it begins to grow dark, the men fire off their guns through the hole left at the top of the wigwam. As soon as this firing ceases, the old women commence knocking and making such a rattling at the door as would frighten away any spirit that would dare to hover near. The next ceremony is, to cut into narrow strips, like ribbon, thin birch bark. These they fold into shapes, and hang round inside the wigwam, so that the least puff of wind will move them. With such scarecrows as these, what spirit would venture to disturb their slumbers? Lest this should not prove effectual, they will also frequently take a deer's tail, and after burning or singeing off all the hair, will rub the necks or faces of the children before they lie down to sleep, thinking that the offensive smell will be another preventive to the spirit's entrance. I well remember when I used to be daubed over with this disagreeable fumigation, and had great faith in it all. Thinking that the soul lingers about the body a long time before it

[1] Rev. G. Whitehead, "Notes on the Chins of Burma," *Indian Antiquary*, xxxvi. (1907) pp. 214 *sq*.

[2] *Relations des Jésuites*, 1639, p. 44 (Canadian reprint, Quebec, 1858).

takes its final departure, they use these means to hasten it away."[1]

Spirits of the dead greatly feared by the Lengua Indians of the Gran Chaco.

The Lengua Indians of the Gran Chaco in South America live in great fear of the spirits of their dead. They imagine that any one of these disembodied spirits can become incarnate again and take a new lease of life on earth, if only it can contrive to get possession of a living man's body during the temporary absence of his soul. For like many other savages they imagine that the soul absents itself from the body during sleep to wander far away in the land of dreams. So when night falls, the ghosts of the dead come crowding to the villages and lurk about, hoping to find vacant bodies into which they can enter. Such are to the thinking of the Lengua Indian the perils and dangers of the night. When he awakes in the morning from a dream in which he seemed to be hunting or fishing far away, he concludes that his soul cannot yet have returned from such a far journey, and that the spirit within him must therefore be some ghost or demon, who has taken possession of his corporeal tenement in the absence of its proper owner. And if these Indians dread the spirits of the departed at all times, they dread them doubly at the moment when they have just shuffled off the mortal coil. No sooner has a person died than the whole village is deserted. Even if the death takes place shortly before sunset the place must at all costs be immediately abandoned, lest with the shades of night the ghost should return and do a mischief to the villagers. Not only is the village deserted, but every hut is burned down and the property of the dead man destroyed. For these Indians believe that, however good and kind a man may have been in his lifetime, his ghost is always a source of danger to the peace and prosperity of the living. The night after his death his disembodied spirit comes back to the village, and chilled by the cool night air looks about for a fire at which to warm himself. He rakes in the ashes to find at least a hot coal which he may blow up into a flame. But if they are all cold and dead, he flings a handful of them in the air

[1] Rev. Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians* (London, N.D.), pp. 99 *sq.*

and departs in dudgeon. Any Indian who treads on such ashes will have ill-luck, if not death, following at his heels. To prevent such mishaps the villagers take the greatest pains to collect and bury all the ash-heaps before they abandon the village. What the fate of a hamlet would be in which the returning ghost found the inhabitants still among their houses, no Indian dares to imagine. Hence it happens that many a village which was full of life at noon is a smoking desert at sunset. And as the Lenguas ascribe all sickness to the machinations of evil spirits and sorcerers, they mutilate the persons of their dying or dead in order to counteract and punish the authors of the disease. For this purpose they cut off the portion of the body in which the evil spirit is supposed to have ensconced himself. A common operation performed on the dying or dead man is this. A gash is made with a knife in his side, the edges of the wound are drawn apart with the fingers, and in the wound are deposited a dog's bone, a stone, and the claw of an armadillo. It is believed that at the departure of the soul from the body the stone will rise up to the Milky Way and will stay there till the author of the death has been discovered. Then the stone will come shooting down in the shape of a meteor and kill, or at least stun, the guilty party. That is why these Indians stand in terror of falling stars. The claw of the armadillo serves to grub up the earth and, in conjunction with the meteor, to ensure the destruction of the evil spirit or the sorcerer. What the virtue of the dog's bone is supposed to be has not yet been ascertained by the missionaries.[1]

A scapegoat for ghosts.

The Bhotias, who inhabit the Himalayan district of British India, perform an elaborate ceremony for transferring the spirit of a deceased person to an animal, which is finally beaten by all the villagers and driven away, that it may not come back. Having thus expelled the ghost the

[1] "Sitten und Gebräuche der Lengua-Indianer, nach Missionsberichten von G. Kurze," *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, xxiii. (1905) pp. 17 *sq.*, 19 *sq.*, 21 *sq.* The Cross River natives of Southern Nigeria, like the Lengua Indians, cut off the diseased members of a corpse, in the belief that if they did not do so the person would suffer from the same disease at his next reincarnation. See Charles Partridge, *Cross River Natives* (London, 1905), pp. 238 *sq.*

people return joyfully to the village with songs and dances. In some places the animal which thus serves as a scapegoat is a yak, the forehead, back, and tail of which must be white. But elsewhere, under the influence of Hindooism, sheep and goats have been substituted for yaks.[1]

Precautions taken by widows in Africa against their husbands' ghosts.

Widows and widowers are especially obnoxious to the ghosts of their deceased spouses, and accordingly they have to take special precautions against them. For example, among the Ewe negroes of Agome, in German Togoland, a widow is bound to remain for six weeks in the hut where her husband lies buried. She is naked, her hair is shaved off, and she is armed with a stick with which to repel the too pressing familiarities of her husband's ghost; for were she to submit to them, she would die on the spot. At night she sleeps with the stick under her, lest the wily ghost should attempt to steal it from her in the hours of slumber. Before she eats or drinks she always puts some coals on the food or in the beverage, to prevent her dead husband from eating or drinking with her; for if he did so, she would die. If any one calls to her, she may not answer, for her dead husband would hear her, and she would die. She may not eat beans or flesh or fish, nor drink palm-wine or rum, but she is allowed to smoke tobacco. At night a fire is kept up in the hut, and the widow throws powdered peppermint leaves and red pepper on the flames to make a stink, which helps to keep the ghost from the house.[2]

Precautions taken by widows and widowers in British Columbia against the ghosts of their spouses.

Among many tribes of British Columbia the conduct of a widow and a widower for a long time after the death of their spouse is regulated by a code of minute and burdensome restrictions, all of which appear to be based on the notion that these persons, being haunted by the ghost, are not only themselves in peril, but are also a source of danger to others. Thus among the Shushwap Indians of British Columbia widows and widowers fence their beds with thorn bushes to keep off the ghost of the deceased; indeed they

[1] Charles A. Sherring, *Western Tibet and the British Borderland* (London, 1906), pp. 127-132.

[2] Lieutenant Herold, "Bericht betreffend religiöse Anschauungen und Gebräuche der deutschen Ewe-Neger," *Mitteilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, v. Heft 4 (Berlin, 1892), p. 155; H. Klose, *Togo unter deutscher Flagge* (Berlin, 1899), p. 274.

lie on such bushes, in order that the ghost may be under little temptation to share their bed of thorns. They must build a sweat-house on a creek, sweat there all night, and bathe regularly in the creek, after which they must rub their bodies with spruce branches. These branches may be used only once for this purpose; afterwards they are stuck in the ground all round about the hut, probably to fence off the ghost. The mourners must also use cups and cooking vessels of their own, and they may not touch their own heads or bodies. Hunters may not go near them, and any person on whom their shadow were to fall would at once be ill.[1] Again, among the Tsetsaut Indians, when a man dies his brother is bound to marry the widow, but he may not do so before the lapse of a certain time, because it is believed that the dead man's ghost haunts his widow and would do a mischief to his living rival. During the time of her mourning the widow eats out of a stone dish, carries a pebble in her mouth, and a crab-apple stick up the back of her jacket. She sits upright day and night. Any person who crosses the hut in front of her is a dead man. The restrictions laid on a widower are similar.[2] Among the Lkungen or Songish Indians, in Vancouver Island, widow and widower, after the death of husband or wife, are forbidden to cut their hair, as otherwise it is believed that they would gain too great power over the souls and welfare of others. They must remain alone at their fire for a long time and are forbidden to mingle with other people. When they eat, nobody may see them. They must keep their faces covered for ten days. For two days after the burial they fast and are not allowed to speak. After that they may speak a little, but before addressing any one they must go into the woods and clean themselves in ponds and with cedar-branches. If they wish to harm an enemy they call out his name when they first break their fast, and they bite very hard in eating. That is believed to kill their enemy, probably (though this is not said) by directing the

[1] Franz Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 92 (*Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, Leeds, 1890, separate reprint).

[2] Franz Boas, in *Tenth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 45 (*Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, Ipswich, 1895, separate reprint).

attention of the ghost to him. They may not go near the water nor eat fresh salmon, or the fish might be driven away. They may not eat warm food, else their teeth would fall out.[1] Among the Bella Coola Indians the bed of a mourner is protected against the ghost of the deceased by thorn-bushes stuck into the ground at each corner. He rises early in the morning and goes out into the woods, where he makes a square with thorn-bushes, and inside of this square, where he is probably supposed to be safe from the intrusion of the ghost, he cleanses himself by rubbing his body with cedar-branches. He also swims in ponds, and after swimming he cleaves four small trees and creeps through the clefts, following the course of the sun. This he does on four subsequent mornings, cleaving new trees every day. We may surmise that the intention of creeping through the cleft trees is to give the slip to the ghost. The mourner also cuts his hair short, and the cut hair is burnt. If he did not observe these regulations, it is believed that he would dream of the deceased, which to the savage mind is another way of saying that he would be visited by his ghost. Amongst these Indians the rules of mourning for a widower or widow are especially strict. For four days he or she must fast and may not speak a word, else the dead wife or husband would come and lay a cold hand on the mouth of the offender, who would die. They may not go near water and are forbidden to catch or eat salmon for a whole year. During that time also they may not eat fresh herring or candle-fish (olachen). Their shadows are deemed unlucky and may not fall on any person.[2]

Precautions taken by widows and widowers among the Thompson Indians.

Among the Thompson Indians of British Columbia widows or widowers, on the death of their husbands or wives, went out at once and passed through a patch of rose-bushes four times. The intention of this ceremony is not reported, but we may conjecture that it was supposed to deter the ghost from following for fear of scratching himself or herself on the thorns. For four days after the death widows and

[1] Franz Boas, in *Sixth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 23 *sq.* (*Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, Leeds, 1890, separate reprint).

[2] Franz Boas, in *Seventh Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, p. 13 (*Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, Cardiff, 1891, separate reprint).

widowers had to wander about at evening or break of day wiping their eyes with fir-twigs, which they hung up in the branches of trees, praying to the Dawn. They also rubbed their eyes with a small stone taken from under running water, then threw it away, while they prayed that they might not become blind. The first four days they might not touch their food, but ate with sharp-pointed sticks, and spat out the first four mouthfuls of each meal, and the first four of water, into the fire. For a year they had to sleep on a bed made of fir-branches, on which rose-bush sticks were also spread at the foot, head, and middle. Many also wore a few small twigs of rose-bush on their persons. The use of the rose-bush was no doubt to keep off the ghost through fear of the prickles. They were forbidden to eat fresh fish and flesh of any kind for a year. A widower might not fish at another man's fishing-place or with another man's net. If he did, it would make the station and the net useless for the season. If a widower transplanted a trout into another lake, before releasing it he blew on the head of the fish, and after chewing deer-fat, he spat some of the grease out on its head, so as to remove the baneful effect of his touch. Then he let it go, bidding the fish farewell, and asking it to propagate its kind. Any grass or branches upon which a widow or widower sat or lay down withered up. If a widow were to break sticks or branches, her own hands or arms would break. She might not cook food nor fetch water for her children, nor let them lie down on her bed, nor should she lie or sit where they slept. Some widows wore a breech-cloth made of dry bunch-grass for several days, lest the ghost of her dead husband should have connexion with her. A widower might not fish or hunt, because it was unlucky both for him and for other hunters. He did not allow his shadow to pass in front of another widower or of any person who was supposed to be gifted with more knowledge or magic than ordinary.[1] Among the Lillooet Indians of British Columbia the rules enjoined on widows and widowers were somewhat similar. But a widower had to observe a

[1] James Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," pp. 332 *sq.* (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, *Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*, April, 1900).

singular custom in eating. He ate his food with the right hand passed underneath his right leg, the knee of which was raised.[1] The motive for conveying food to his mouth in this roundabout fashion is not mentioned: we may conjecture that it was to baffle the hungry ghost, who might be supposed to watch every mouthful swallowed by the mourner, but who could hardly suspect that food passed under the knee was intended to reach the mouth.

Precautions taken by widows and widowers among the Kwakiutl Indians.

Among the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia we are told "the regulations referring to the mourning period are very severe. In case of the death of husband or wife, the survivor has to observe the following rules: for four days after the death the survivor must sit motionless, the knees drawn up toward the chin. On the third day all the inhabitants of the village, including children, must take a bath. On the fourth day some water is heated in a wooden kettle, and the widow or widower drips it upon his head. When he becomes tired of sitting motionless, and must move, he thinks of his enemy, stretches his legs slowly four times, and draws them up again. Then his enemy must die. During the following sixteen days he must remain on the same spot, but he may stretch out his legs. He is not allowed, however, to move his hands. Nobody must speak to him, and whosoever disobeys this command will be punished by the death of one of his relatives. Every fourth day he takes a bath. He is fed twice a day by an old woman at the time of low water, with salmon caught in the preceding year, and given to him in the dishes and spoons of the deceased. While sitting so his mind is wandering to and fro. He sees his house and his friends as though far, far away. If in his visions he sees a man near by, the latter is sure to die at no distant day; if he sees him very far away, he will continue to live long. After the sixteen days have passed, he may lie down, but not stretch out. He takes a bath every eighth day. At the end of the first month he takes off his clothing, and dresses the stump of a tree with it. After another month has passed he may sit in a corner

[1] James Teit, "The Lillooet Indians" (Leyden and New York, 1906), p. 271 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*).

of the house, but for four months he must not mingle with others. He must not use the house door, but a separate door is cut for his use. Before he leaves the house for the first time he must three times approach the door and return, then he may leave the house. After ten months his hair is cut short, and after a year the mourning is at an end."[1]

Though the reasons for the elaborate restrictions thus imposed on widows and widowers by the Indians of British Columbia are not always stated, we may safely infer that one and all they are dictated by fear of the ghost, who, haunting the surviving spouse, surrounds him or her with a dangerous atmosphere, a contagion of death, which necessitates his seclusion both from the people themselves and from the principal sources of their food supply, especially from the fisheries, lest the infected person should poison them by his malignant presence. We can, therefore, understand the extraordinary treatment of a widower by the Papuans of Issoudun in British New Guinea. His miseries begin with the moment of his wife's death. He is immediately stripped of all his ornaments, abused and beaten by his wife's relations, his house is pillaged, his gardens devastated, there is no one to cook for him. He sleeps on his wife's grave till the end of his mourning. He may never marry again. By the death of his wife he loses all his rights. It is civil death for him. Old or young, chief or plebeian, he is no longer anybody, he does not count. He may not hunt or fish with the others; his presence would bring misfortune; the spirit of his dead wife would frighten the fish or the game. He is no longer heard in the discussions. He has no voice in the council of elders. He may not take part in a dance; he may not own a garden. If one of his children marries, he has no right to interfere in anything or receive any present. If he were dead, he could not be ignored more completely. He has become a nocturnal animal. He is forbidden to shew himself in public, to traverse the village, to walk in the roads and paths. Like a boar, he must go in the grass or

Social ostracism of widowers in New Guinea dictated by fear of the ghosts of their dead wives.

[1] Franz Boas, in *Fifth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada*, pp. 43 *sq.* (*Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1889, separate reprint).

the bushes. If he hears or sees any one, especially a woman, coming from afar, he must hide himself behind a tree or a thicket. If he wishes to go hunting or fishing by himself, he must go at night. If he has to consult any one, even the missionary, he does it in great secrecy and by night. He seems to have lost his voice, and only speaks in a whisper. He is painted black from head to foot. The hair of his head is shaved, except two tufts which flutter on his temples. He wears a skull-cap which covers his head completely to the ears; it ends in a point at the back of his neck. Round his waist he wears one, two, or three sashes of plaited grass; his arms and legs from the knees to the ankles are covered with armlets and leglets of the same sort; and round his neck he wears a similar ornament. His diet is strictly regulated, but he does not observe it more than he can help, eating in secret whatever is given him or he can lay his hands on. "His tomahawk accompanies him everywhere and always. He needs it to defend himself against the wild boars and also against the spirit of his dead wife, who might take a fancy to come and play him some mischievous prank; for the souls of the dead come back often and their visit is far from being desired, inasmuch as all the spirits without exception are bad and have no pleasure but in harming the living. Happily people can keep them at bay by a stick, fire, an arrow, or a tomahawk. The condition of a widower, far from exciting pity or compassion, only serves to render him the object of horror and fear. Almost all widowers, in fact, have the reputation of being more or less sorcerers, and their mode of life is not fitted to give the lie to public opinion. They are forced to become idlers and thieves, since they are forbidden to work: no work, no gardens; no gardens, no food: steal then they must, and that is a trade which cannot be plied without some audacity and knavery at a pinch."[1]

The widespread fear of ghosts among

It would be easy, but superfluous, to multiply evidence of the terror which a belief in ghosts has spread among mankind, and of the consequences, sometimes tragical, sometimes

[1] Father Guis (de la Congrégation du Sacré-Cœur d'Issoudun, Missionnaire en Nouvelle-Guinée), "Les Canaques, mort-deuil," *Les Missions catholiques*, xxxiv. (Lyons, 1902) pp. 208 *sq.*

ludicrous, which that belief has brought in its train.[1] The preceding instances may suffice for my purpose, which is merely to indicate the probability that this widespread superstition has served a useful purpose by enhancing the sacredness of human life. For it is reasonable to suppose that men are more loth to spill the blood of their fellows when they believe that by so doing they expose themselves to the vengeance of an angry and powerful spirit whom it is difficult either to evade or to deceive. Fortunately in this matter we are not left wholly to conjecture. In the vast empire of China, as we are assured by the best living authority on Chinese religion, the fear of ghosts has actually produced this salutary result. Amongst the Chinese the faith in the existence of the dead, in their power to reward kindness and avenge injury, is universal and inveterate; it has been handed down from an immemorial past, and it is nourished in the experience, or rather in the mind, of everybody by hundreds of ghost stories, all of which are accepted as authentic. Nobody doubts that ghosts may interfere at any moment for good or evil in the business of life, in the regulation of human destiny. To the Chinese their dead are not what our dead are to most of us, a dim sad memory, a shadowy congregation somewhere far away, to whom we may go in time, but who cannot come to us or exercise any influence on the land of the living. On the contrary, in the opinion of the Chinese the dead not only exist but keep up a most lively intercourse, an active interchange of good and evil, with the survivors. There is, indeed, even in China, a line of demarcation between men and spirits, between the living and the dead, but it is said to be very faint, almost imperceptible. This perpetual commerce between the two worlds, the material and the spiritual, is a source both of bane and of blessing: the spirits of the departed rule human destiny with a rod of iron or of gold. From them man has everything to hope, but also much to fear. Hence as a natural consequence it is to the ghosts, to the souls of the dead, that the Chinaman

Mankind has probably had the effect of making men less ready to take each other's lives.

In China the faith in the power of ghosts is universal.

[1] Elsewhere I have illustrated the fear of the dead as it is displayed in funeral customs ("On certain Burial Customs as illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xv. (1886) pp. 64 *sqq.*).

pays his devotions; it is around their dear or dreadful figures as a centre that his religion revolves. To ensure their good-will and help, to avert their wrath and fierce attacks, that is the first and the last object of his religious ceremonies.[1]

In China respect for human life in enforced by fear of ghosts.

This faith of the Chinese in the existence and power of the dead, we are informed, "indubitably exercises a mighty and salutary influence upon morals. It enforces respect for human life and a charitable treatment of the infirm, the aged and the sick, especially if they stand on the brink of the grave. Benevolence and humanity, thus based on fears and selfishness, may have little ethical value in our eye; but for all that, their existence in a country where culture has not yet taught man to cultivate good for the sake of good alone, may be greeted as a blessing. Those virtues are even extended to animals, for, in fact, these too have souls which may work vengeance or bring reward. But the firm belief in ghosts and their retributive justice has still other effects. It deters from grievous and provoking injustice, because the wronged party, thoroughly sure of the avenging power of his own spirit when disembodied, will not always shrink from converting himself into a wrathful ghost by committing suicide," in order to wreak in death that vengeance on his oppressor which he could not exact in life. Cases of suicide committed with this intention are said to be far from rare in China.[2] "This simple complex of tenets," says Professor de Groot, "lays disrespect for human lives under great restraint. Most salutarily also they work upon female infanticide, a monstrous custom practised extensively among the poor in Amoy and the surrounding farming districts, as in many other parts of the Empire. The fear that the souls of the murdered little ones may bring misfortune, induces many a father or mother to lay the girls they are unwilling to bring up, in the street for adoption into some family or into a foundling-hospital." Humane and well-to-do people take advantage of these superstitious fears to inculcate a merciful treatment of female infants; for they print and circulate gratuitously tracts which set forth many gruesome

In particular, the fear of ghosts acts as a check on the practice of infanticide.

[1] J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, iv. (Leyden, 1901) pp. 436 *sqq.*, especially pp. 450, 464.

[2] J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, iv. 450 *sq.*

examples of punishments inflicted upon unnatural fathers and mothers by the ghosts of their murdered daughters. These highly-coloured narratives, though they bear all the marks of a florid fancy, are said to answer their benevolent purpose perfectly; for they sink deep into the credulous minds to which they are addressed: they touch the seared conscience and the callous heart which no appeal to mere natural affection could move to pity.[1]

The fear of ghosts operates in a twofold way to enforce respect for human life: it furnishes the individual with a motive for abstaining from murder, and it furnishes the community with a motive for punishing the murderer.

But while the fear of the ghost has thus operated directly to enhance the sanctity of human life by deterring the cruel, the passionate, and the malignant from the shedding of blood, it has operated also indirectly to bring about the same salutary result. For not only does the hag-ridden murderer himself dread his victim's ghost, but the whole community, as we have seen, dreads it also and believes itself endangered by the murderer's presence, since the wrathful spirit which pursues him may turn on other people and rend them. Hence society has a strong motive for secluding, banishing, or exterminating the culprit in order to free itself from what it believes to be an imminent danger, a perilous pollution, a contagion of death.[2] To put it in another way, the community has an interest in punishing homicide. Not that the treatment of homicides by the tribe or state was originally conceived as a punishment inflicted on them: rather it was viewed as a measure of self-defence, a moral quarantine, a process of spiritual purification and disinfection, an exorcism. It was a mode of cleansing the people generally and sometimes the homicide himself from the ghostly infection, which to the primitive mind appears to be something material and tangible, something that can be literally washed or scoured away by water, pig's blood, sheep's blood, or other detergents. But when this purification took the form of laying the manslayer under restraint, banishing him from the country, or putting him to death in order to appease his victim's ghost, it was for all practical purposes indistinguishable from punishment, and the fear of it would

[1] J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, iv. 457-460.

[2] The Greek orator Antiphon observes that the presence of a homicide pollutes the whole city and brings the curse of barrenness on the land (Antiphon, ed. F. Blass, Leipsic, 1871, pp. 13, 15, 30). See further L. R. Farnell, *The Evolution of Religion* (London, 1905), pp. 139 *sqq*.

act as a deterrent just as surely as if it had been designed to be a punishment and nothing else. When a man is about to be hanged, it is little consolation to him to be told that hanging is not a punishment but a purification. But the one conception slides easily and almost imperceptibly into the other; so that what was at first a religious rite, a solemn consecration or sacrifice, comes in course of time to be a purely civil function, the penalty which society exacts from those who have injured it: the sacrifice becomes an execution, the priest steps back and the hangman comes forward. Thus criminal justice was probably based in large measure on a crude form of superstition long before the subtle brains of jurists and philosophers deduced it logically, according to their various predilections, from a rigid theory of righteous retribution, a far-sighted policy of making the law a terror to evil-doers, or a benevolent desire to reform the criminal's character and save his soul in another world by hanging or burning his body in this one. If these deductions only profess to justify theoretically the practice of punishment, they may be well or ill founded; but if they claim to explain it historically, they are certainly false. You cannot thus reconstruct the past by importing into one age the ideas of another, by interpreting the earliest in terms of the latest products of mental evolution. You may make revolutions in that way, but you cannot write history.

When the fear of ghosts has diminished, the fear of the law remains to protect the lives of peaceful citizens.

If these views are correct, the dread of the ghost has operated in a twofold way to protect human life. On the one hand it has made every individual for his own sake more reluctant to slay his fellow, and on the other hand it has roused the whole community to punish the slayer. It has placed every man's life within a double ring-fence of morality and law. The hot-headed and the cold-hearted have been furnished with a double motive for abstaining from the last fatal step: they have had to fear the spirit of their victim on the one side and the lash of the law on the other: they are in a strait between the devil and the deep sea, between the ghost and the gallows. And when with the progress of thought the shadow of the ghost passes away, the grim shadow of the gallows remains to protect society without the aid of superstitious terrors. It is thus that custom often

outlives the motive which originated it. If only an institution is good in practice, it will stand firm after its old theoretical basis has been shattered: a new and more solid, because a truer, foundation will be discovered for it to rest upon. More and more, as time goes on, morality shifts its ground from the sands of superstition to the rock of reason, from the imaginary to the real, from the supernatural to the natural. In the present case the State has not ceased to protect the lives of its peaceful citizens because the faith in ghosts is shaken. It has found a better reason than old wives' fables for guarding with the flaming sword of Justice the approach to the Tree of Life.

VI

CONCLUSION

Summary of results.

To sum up this brief review of the influence which superstition has exercised on the growth of institutions, I think I have shewn, or at least made probable:—

I. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for government, especially monarchical government, and has thereby contributed to the establishment and maintenance of civil order:

II. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for private property and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment:

III. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for marriage and has thereby contributed to a stricter observance of the rules of sexual morality both among the married and the unmarried:

IV. That among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect for human life and has thereby contributed to the security of its enjoyment.

By strengthening the respect for government, private property, marriage, and human life superstition has rendered a great

But government, private property, marriage, and respect for human life are the pillars on which rests the whole fabric of civil society. Shake them and you shake society to its foundations. Therefore if government, private property, marriage, and respect for human life are all good and essential to the very existence of civil society, then it follows that by strengthening every one of them superstition has rendered a great service to humanity. It has supplied multitudes with a motive, a wrong motive it is true, for

right action; and surely it is better, far better for the world that men should do right from wrong motives than that they should do wrong with the best intentions. What concerns society is conduct, not opinion: if only our actions are just and good, it matters not a straw to others whether our opinions be mistaken. The danger of false opinion, and it is a most serious one, is that it commonly leads to wrong action; hence it is unquestionably a great evil and every effort should be made to correct it. But of the two evils wrong action is in itself infinitely worse than false opinion; and all systems of religion or philosophy which lay more stress on right opinion than on right action, which exalt orthodoxy above virtue, are so far immoral and prejudicial to the best interests of mankind: they invert the true relative importance, the real ethical value, of thought and action, for it is by what we do, not by what we think, that we are useful or useless, beneficent or maleficent to our fellows. As a body of false opinions, therefore, superstition is indeed a most dangerous guide in practice, and the evils which it has wrought are incalculable. But vast as are these evils, they ought not to blind us to the benefit which superstition has conferred on society by furnishing the ignorant, the weak, and the foolish with a motive, bad though it be, for good conduct. It is a reed, a broken reed, which has yet supported the steps of many a poor erring brother, who but for it might have stumbled and fallen. It is a light, a dim and wavering light, which, if it has lured many a mariner on the breakers, has yet guided some wanderers on life's troubled sea into a haven of rest and peace. Once the harbour lights are passed and the ship is in port, it matters little whether the pilot steered by a Jack-o'-lantern or by the stars.

Service to humanity.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is my plea for Superstition. Perhaps it might be urged in mitigation of the sentence which will be passed on the hoary-headed offender when he stands at the judgment bar. Yet the sentence, do not doubt it, is death. But it will not be executed in our time. There will be a long, long reprieve. It is as his advocate, not as his executioner, that I have appeared before you

Superstition at the bar. Sentence of death.

to-night. At Athens cases of murder were tried before the Areopagus by night,[1] and it is by night that I have spoken in defence of this power of darkness. But it grows late, and with my sinister client I must vanish before the cocks crow and the morning breaks grey in the east.

[1] Lucian, *Hermotimus*, 64, κατὰ τοὺς Ἀρειοπαγίτας αὐτὸ ποιοῦντα, οἳ ἐν νυκτὶ καὶ σκότῳ δικάζουσιν, ὡς μὴ ἐς τοὺς λέγοντας, ἀλλ' ἐς τὰ λεγόμενα ἀποβλέποιεν: *id.*, *De domo*, 18, εἰ μὴ τύχοι τις παντελῶς τυφλὸς ὢν ἢ ἐν νυκτὶ ὥσπερ ἡ ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου βουλὴ ποιοῖτο τὴν ἀκρόασιν.

THE SCOPE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

THE SCOPE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY[1]

THE subject of the chair which I have the honour to hold is Social Anthropology. As the subject is still comparatively new and its limits are still somewhat vague, I shall devote my inaugural lecture to defining its scope and marking out roughly, if not the boundaries of the whole study, at least the boundaries of that part of it which I propose to take for my province.

Social Anthropology.

Strange as it may seem, in the large and thriving family of the sciences, Anthropology, or the Science of Man, is the latest born. So young indeed is the study that three of its distinguished founders in England, Professor E. B. Tylor, Lord Avebury, and Mr. Francis Galton, are happily still with us. It is true that particular departments of man's complex nature have long been the theme of special studies. Anatomy has investigated his body, psychology has explored his mind, theology and metaphysics have sought to plumb the depths of the great mysteries by which he is encompassed on every hand. But it has been reserved for the present generation, or rather for the generation which is passing away, to attempt the comprehensive study of man as a whole, to enquire not merely into the physical and mental structure of the individual, but to compare the various races of men, to trace their affinities, and by means of a wide collection of facts to follow as far as may be the evolution of human thought and institutions from the earliest times. The aim of this, as of every other science, is to

Anthropology a study of recent date.

[1] A lecture delivered before the University of Liverpool, May 14th, 1908.

discover the general laws to which the particular facts may be supposed to conform. I say, may be supposed to conform, because research in all departments has rendered it antecedently probable that everywhere law and order will be found to prevail if we search for them diligently, and that accordingly the affairs of man, however complex and incalculable they may seem to be, are no exception to the uniformity of nature. Anthropology, therefore, in the widest sense of the word, aims at discovering the general laws which have regulated human history in the past, and which, if nature is really uniform, may be expected to regulate it in the future.

The scope of Social Anthropology more limited than that of Sociology; it includes only the rudimentary phases of human society.

Hence the science of man coincides to a certain extent with what has long been known as the philosophy of history as well as with the study to which of late years the name of Sociology has been given. Indeed it might with some reason be held that Social Anthropology, or the study of man in society, is only another expression for Sociology. Yet I think that the two sciences may be conveniently distinguished, and that while the name of Sociology should be reserved for the study of human society in the most comprehensive sense of the words, the name of Social Anthropology may with advantage be restricted to one particular department of that immense field of knowledge. At least I wish to make it perfectly clear at the outset that I for one do not pretend to treat of the whole of human society, past, present, and future. Whether any single man's compass of mind and range of learning suffice for such a vast undertaking, I will not venture to say, but I do say without hesitation or ambiguity that mine certainly do not. I can only speak of what I have studied, and my studies have been mostly confined to a small, a very small part of man's social history. That part is the origin, or rather the rudimentary phases, the infancy and childhood, of human society, and to that part accordingly I propose to limit the scope of Social Anthropology, or at all events my treatment of it. My successors in the chair will be free to extend their purview beyond the narrow boundaries which the limitation of my knowledge imposes on me. They may survey the latest developments as well as the earliest beginnings of custom

and law, of science and art, of morality and religion, and from that survey they may deduce the principles which should guide mankind in the future, so that those who come after us may avoid the snares and pitfalls into which we and our fathers have slipped. For the best fruit of knowledge is wisdom, and it may reasonably be hoped that a deeper and wider acquaintance with the past history of mankind will in time enable our statesmen to mould the destiny of the race in fairer forms than we of this generation shall live to see.

> "*Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire*
> *To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,*
> *Would we not shatter it to bits—and then*
> *Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's desire!*"

At least the present lecturer limits himself to these phases.

But if you wish to shatter the social fabric, you must not expect your professor of Social Anthropology to aid and abet you. He is no seer to discern, no prophet to foretell a coming heaven on earth, no mountebank with a sovran remedy for every ill, no Red Cross Knight to head a crusade against misery and want, against disease and death, against all the horrid spectres that war on poor humanity. It is for others with higher notes and nobler natures than his to sound the charge and lead it in this Holy War. He is only a student, a student of the past, who may perhaps tell you a little, a very little, of what has been, but who cannot, dare not tell you what ought to be. Yet even the little that he can contribute to the elucidation of the past may have its utility as well as its interest when it finally takes its place in that great temple of science to which it is the ambition of every student to add a stone. For we cherish a belief that if we truly love and seek knowledge for its own sake, without any ulterior aim, every addition we may make to it, however insignificant and useless it may appear, will yet at last be found to work together with the whole accumulated store for the general good of mankind.

Social Anthropology embraces the study, first, of savagery,

Thus the sphere of Social Anthropology as I understand it, or at least as I propose to treat it, is limited to the crude beginnings, the rudimentary development of human society: it does not include the maturer phases of that complex growth, still less does it embrace the practical problems

and, second, of folklore, that is, of the traces of savagery in civilization.

with which our modern statesmen and lawgivers are called upon to deal. The study might accordingly be described as the embryology of human thought and institutions, or, to be more precise, as that enquiry which seeks to ascertain, first, the beliefs and customs of savages, and, second, the relics of these beliefs and customs which have survived like fossils among peoples of higher culture. In this description of the sphere of Social Anthropology it is implied that the ancestors of the civilized nations were once savages, and that they have transmitted, or may have transmitted, to their more cultured descendants ideas and institutions which, however incongruous with their later surroundings, were perfectly in keeping with the modes of thought and action of the ruder society in which they originated. In short, the definition assumes that civilization has always and everywhere been evolved out of savagery. The mass of evidence on which this assumption rests is in my opinion so great as to render the induction incontrovertible. At least, if any one disputes it I do not think it worth while to argue with him. There are still, I believe, in civilized society people who hold that the earth is flat and that the sun goes round it; but no sensible man will waste time in the vain attempt to convince such persons of their error, even though these flatteners of the earth and circulators of the sun appeal with perfect justice to the evidence of their senses in support of their hallucination, which is more than the opponents of man's primitive savagery are able to do.

All civilization evolved from savagery.

Hence a study of savagery essential to an understanding of the evolution of humanity.

Thus the study of savage life is a very important part of Social Anthropology. For by comparison with civilized man the savage represents an arrested or rather retarded stage of social development, and an examination of his customs and beliefs accordingly supplies the same sort of evidence of the evolution of the human mind that an examination of the embryo supplies of the evolution of the human body. To put it otherwise, a savage is to a civilized man as a child is to an adult; and just as the gradual growth of intelligence in a child corresponds to, and in a sense recapitulates, the gradual growth of intelligence in the species, so a study of savage society at various stages of evolution enables us to follow approximately, though of

course not exactly, the road by which the ancestors of the higher races must have travelled in their progress upward through barbarism to civilization. In short, savagery is the primitive condition of mankind, and if we would understand what primitive man was we must know what the savage now is.

Savages of the present day are primitive only in a relative sense, namely by comparison with civilized peoples; their customs and beliefs are in fact the product of a long course of evolution as to which we can know little or nothing.

But here it is necessary to guard against a common misapprehension. The savages of to-day are primitive only in a relative, not in an absolute sense. They are primitive by comparison with us; but they are not primitive by comparison with truly primæval man, that is, with man as he was when he first emerged from the purely bestial stage of existence. Indeed, compared with man in his absolutely pristine state even the lowest savage of to-day is doubtless a highly developed and cultured being, since all evidence and all probability are in favour of the view that every existing race of men, the rudest as well as the most civilized, has reached its present level of culture, whether it be high or low, only after a slow and painful progress upwards, which must have extended over many thousands, perhaps millions, of years. Therefore when we speak of any known savages as primitive, which the usage of the English language permits us to do, it should always be remembered that we apply the term primitive to them in a relative, not in an absolute sense. What we mean is that their culture is rudimentary compared with that of the civilized nations, but not by any means that it is identical with that of primæval man. It is necessary to emphasize this relative use of the term primitive in its application to all known savages without exception, because the ambiguity arising from the double meaning of the word has been the source of much confusion and misunderstanding. Careless or unscrupulous writers have made great play with it for purposes of controversy, using the word now in the one sense and now in the other as it suited their argument at the moment, without perceiving, or at all events without indicating, the equivocation. In order to avoid these verbal fallacies it is only necessary to bear steadily in mind that while Social Anthropology has much to say of primitive man in the relative sense, it has nothing whatever to say about primitive man in the absolute sense,

and that for the very simple reason that it knows nothing whatever about him, and, so far as we can see at present, is never likely to know anything. To construct a history of human society by starting from absolutely primordial man and working down through thousands or millions of years to the institutions of existing savages might possibly have merits as a flight of imagination, but it could have none as a work of science. To do this would be exactly to reverse the proper mode of scientific procedure. It would be to work *a priori* from the unknown to the known instead of *a posteriori* from the known to the unknown. For we do know a good deal about the social state of the savages of to-day and yesterday, but we know nothing whatever, I repeat, about absolutely primitive human society. Hence a sober enquirer who seeks to elucidate the social evolution of mankind in ages before the dawn of history must start, not from an unknown and purely hypothetical primæval man, but from the lowest savages whom we know or possess adequate records of; and from their customs, beliefs, and traditions as a solid basis of fact he may work back a little way hypothetically through the obscurity of the past; that is, he may form a reasonable theory of the way in which these actual customs, beliefs, and traditions have grown up and developed in a period more or less remote, but probably not very remote, from the one in which they have been observed and recorded. But if, as I assume, he is a sober enquirer, he will never expect to carry back this reconstruction of human history very far, still less will he dream of linking it up with the very beginning, because he is aware that we possess no evidence which would enable us to bridge even hypothetically the gulf of thousands or millions of years which divides the savage of to-day from primæval man.

For example, the marriage customs and systems of relationship prevalent among many savage

It may be well to illustrate my meaning by an example. The matrimonial customs and modes of tracing relationships which prevail among some savage races, and even among peoples at a higher stage of culture, furnish very strong grounds for believing that the systems of marriage and consanguinity which are now in vogue among civilized peoples must have been immediately preceded at a more or less distant time by very different modes of counting kin and regulating marriage;

in fact, that monogamy and the forbidden degrees of kinship have replaced an older system of much wider and looser sexual relations. But to say this is not to affirm that such looser and wider relations were characteristic of the absolutely primitive condition of mankind; it is only to say that actually existing customs and traditions clearly indicate the extensive prevalence of such relations at some former time in the history of our race. How remote that time was, we cannot tell; but, estimated by the whole vast period of man's existence on earth, it seems probable that the era of sexual communism to which the evidence points was comparatively recent; in other words, that for the civilized races the interval which divides that era from our own is to be reckoned by thousands rather than by hundreds of thousands of years, while for the lowest of existing savages, for example, the aborigines of Australia, it is possible or probable that the interval may not be greater than a few centuries. Be that as it may, even if on the strength of the evidence I have referred to we could demonstrate the former prevalence of a system of sexual communism among all the races of mankind, this would only carry us back a single step in the long history of our species; it would not justify us in concluding that such a system had been practised by truly primæval man, still less that it had prevailed among mankind from the beginning down to the comparatively recent period at which its existence may be inferred from the evidence at our disposal. About the social condition of primæval man, I repeat, we know absolutely nothing, and it is vain to speculate. Our first parents may have been as strict monogamists as Whiston or Dr. Primrose, or they may have been just the reverse. We have no information on the subject, and are never likely to get any. In the countless ages which have elapsed since man and woman first roamed the happy garden hand in hand or jabbered like apes among the leafy boughs of the virgin forest, their relations to each other may have undergone innumerable changes. For human affairs, like the courses of the heaven, seem to run in cycles: the social pendulum swings to and fro from one extremity of the scale to the other: in the political sphere it has swung from democracy to despotism, and back again from despotism to democracy;

tribes appear to have been evolved from a preceding, but not necessarily primitive, state of sexual promiscuity.

and so in the domestic sphere it may have oscillated many a time between libertinism and monogamy.

The second department of Social Anthropology is folklore, or the study of savage survivals in civilization.

If I am right in my definition of Social Anthropology, its province may be roughly divided into two departments, one of which embraces the customs and beliefs of savages, while the other includes such relics of these customs and beliefs as have survived in the thought and institutions of more cultured peoples. The one department may be called the study of savagery, the other the study of folklore. I have said something of savagery: I now turn to folklore, that is, to the survivals of more primitive ideas and practices among peoples who in other respects have risen to a higher plane of culture. That such survivals may be discovered in every civilized nation will hardly now be disputed by anybody. When we read, for example, of an Irishwoman roasted to death by her husband on a suspicion that she was not his wife but a fairy changeling,[1] or again, of an Englishwoman dying of lockjaw because she had anointed the nail that wounded her instead of the wound,[2] we may be sure that the beliefs to which these poor creatures fell victims were not learned by them in school or at church, but had been transmitted from truly savage ancestors through many generations of outwardly though not really civilized descendants. Beliefs and practices of this sort are therefore rightly called superstitions, which means literally survivals. It is with superstitions in the strict sense of the word that the second department of Social Anthropology is concerned.

Such survivals are due to the essential inequality of men, many of whom remain at heart

If we ask how it happens that superstitions linger among a people who in general have reached a higher level of culture, the answer is to be found in the natural, universal, and ineradicable inequality of men. Not only are different races differently endowed in respect of intelligence, courage, industry, and so forth, but within the same nation men of the same generation differ enormously in inborn capacity and worth. No abstract doctrine is more false and mischievous

[1] This happened at Ballyvadlea, in the county of Tipperary, in March 1895. For details of the evidence given at the trial of the murderers, see "The 'Witch-burning' at Clonmel," *Folk-lore*, vi. (1895) pp. 373-384.

[2] This happened at Norwich in June 1902. See *The People's Weekly Journal for Norfolk*, July 19, 1902, p. 8.

than that of the natural equality of men. It is true that the legislator must treat men as if they were equal, because laws of necessity are general and cannot be made so as to fit the infinite variety of individual cases. But we must not imagine that because men are equal before the law they are therefore intrinsically equal to each other. The experience of common life sufficiently contradicts such a vain imagination. At school and at the universities, at work and at play, in peace and in war, the mental and moral inequalities of human beings stand out too conspicuously to be ignored or disputed. On the whole the men of keenest intelligence and strongest characters lead the rest and shape the moulds into which, outwardly at least, society is cast. As such men are necessarily few by comparison with the multitude whom they lead, it follows that the community is really dominated by the will of an enlightened minority[1] even in countries where the ruling power is nominally vested in the hands of the numerical majority. In fact, disguise it as we may, the government of mankind is always and everywhere essentially aristocratic. No juggling with political machinery can evade this law of nature. However it may seem to lead, the dull-witted majority in the end follows a keener-witted minority. That is its salvation and the secret of progress. The higher human intelligence sways the lower, just as the intelligence of man gives him the mastery over the brutes. I do not mean that the ultimate direction of society rests with its nominal governors, with its kings, its statesmen, its legislators. The true rulers of men are the thinkers who advance knowledge; for just as it is through his superior knowledge, not through his superior strength, that man bears rule over the rest of the animal creation, so among men themselves it is knowledge which in the long run directs and controls the forces of society. Thus the discoverers of new truths are the real though uncrowned and unsceptred kings of mankind; monarchs, statesmen, and law-givers are but their ministers, who sooner or later do their bidding by carrying out the ideas of these master

Savages under a civilized exterior.

Mankind dominated by an enlightened minority.

The uncrowned kings.

[1] I say "*an* enlightened minority," because in any large community there are always many minorities, and some of them are very far from enlightened. It is possible to be below as well as above the average level of our fellows.

minds. The more we study the inward workings of society and the progress of civilization, the more clearly shall we perceive how both are governed by the influence of thoughts which, springing up at first we know not how or whence in a few superior minds, gradually spread till they have leavened the whole inert lump of a community or of mankind. The origin of such mental variations, with all their far-reaching train of social consequences, is just as obscure as is the origin of those physical variations on which, if biologists are right, depends the evolution of species, and with it the possibility of progress. Perhaps the same unknown cause which determines the one set of variations gives rise to the other also. We cannot tell. All we can say is that on the whole in the conflict of competing forces, whether physical or mental, the strongest at last prevails, the fittest survives. In the mental sphere the struggle for existence is not less fierce and internecine than in the physical, but in the end the better ideas, which we call the truth, carry the day. The clamorous opposition with which at their first appearance they are regularly greeted, whenever they conflict with old prejudices, may retard but cannot prevent their final victory. It is the practice of the mob first to stone and then to erect useless memorials to their greatest benefactors. All who set themselves to replace ancient error and superstition by truth and reason must lay their account with brickbats in their life and a marble monument after death.

The tombs of the prophets.

Superstition the creed of the laggards in the march of intellect.

I have been led into making these remarks by the wish to explain why it is that superstitions of all sorts, political, moral, and religious, survive among peoples who have the opportunity of knowing better. The reason is that the better ideas, which are constantly forming in the upper stratum, have not yet filtered through from the highest to the lowest minds. Such a filtration is generally slow, and by the time that the new notions have penetrated to the bottom, if indeed they ever get there, they are often already obsolete and superseded by others at the top. Hence it is that if we could open the heads and read the thoughts of two men of the same generation and country but at opposite ends of the intellectual scale, we should probably find their minds as

different as if the two belonged to different species. Mankind, as it has been well said, advances in *échelons*; that is, the columns march not abreast of each other but in a straggling line, all lagging in various degrees behind the leader. The image well describes the difference not only between peoples, but between individuals of the same people and the same generation. Just as one nation is continually outstripping some of its contemporaries, so within the same nation some men are constantly outpacing their fellows, and the foremost in the race are those who have thrown off the load of superstition which still burdens the backs and clogs the footsteps of the laggards. To drop metaphor, superstitions survive because, while they shock the views of enlightened members of the community, they are still in harmony with the thoughts and feelings of others who, though they are drilled by their betters into an appearance of civilization, remain barbarians or savages at heart. That is why, for example, the barbarous punishments for high treason and witchcraft and the enormities of slavery were tolerated and defended in this country down to modern times. Such survivals may be divided into two sorts, according as they are public or private; in other words, according as they are embodied in the law of the land or are practised with or without the connivance of the law in holes and corners. The examples I have just cited belong to the former of these two classes. Witches were publicly burned and traitors were publicly disembowelled in England not so long ago, and slavery survived as a legal institution still later. The true nature of such public superstitions is apt, through their very publicity, to escape detection, because until they are finally swept away by the rising tide of progress, there are always plenty of people to defend them as institutions essential to the public welfare and sanctioned by the laws of God and man.

Superstitions either public or private.

Examples of public superstitions.

It is otherwise with those private superstitions to which the name of folklore is usually confined. In civilized society most educated people are not even aware of the extent to which these relics of savage ignorance survive at their doors. The discovery of their wide prevalence was indeed only made last century, chiefly through the researches of the brothers

The wide prevalence of private superstitions constitutes a standing menace to civilization.

Grimm in Germany. Since their day systematic enquiries carried on among the less educated classes, and especially among the peasantry, of Europe have revealed the astonishing, nay, alarming truth that a mass, if not the majority, of people in every civilized country is still living in a state of intellectual savagery, that, in fact, the smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined by superstition. Only those whose studies have led them to investigate the subject are aware of the depth to which the ground beneath our feet is thus, as it were, honeycombed by unseen forces. We appear to be standing on a volcano which may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation among the gardens and palaces of ancient culture wrought so laboriously by the hands of many generations. After looking on the ruined Greek temples of Paestum and contrasting them with the squalor and savagery of the Italian peasantry, Renan said, "I trembled for civilization, seeing it so limited, built on so weak a foundation, resting on so few individuals even in the country where it is dominant."[1]

It is the earliest and crudest superstitions that survive longest, because they answer to the calibre of the lowest minds. Hence while the surface of society is constantly changing, its depths, like those of the ocean, remain almost motionless.

If we examine the superstitious beliefs which are tacitly but firmly held by many of our fellow-countrymen, we shall find, perhaps to our surprise, that it is precisely the oldest and crudest superstitions which are most tenacious of life, while views which, though also erroneous, are more modern and refined, soon fade from the popular memory. For example, the high gods of Egypt and Babylon, of Greece and Rome, have for ages been totally forgotten by the people and survive only in the books of the learned; yet the peasants, who never even heard of Isis and Osiris, of Apollo and Artemis, of Jupiter and Juno, retain to this day a firm belief in witches and fairies, in ghosts and hobgoblins, those lesser creatures of the mythical fancy in which their fathers believed long before the great deities of the ancient world were ever thought of, and in which, to all appearance, their descendants will continue to believe long after the great deities of the present day shall have gone the way of all their predecessors. The reason why the higher forms of superstition or religion (for the religion of one generation is

[1] E. Renan et M. Berthelot, *Correspondance* (Paris, 1898), pp. 75 *sq.*

apt to become the superstition of the next) are less permanent than the lower is simply that the higher beliefs, being a creation of superior intelligence, have little hold on the minds of the vulgar, who nominally profess them for a time in conformity with the will of their betters, but readily shed and forget them as soon as these beliefs have gone out of fashion with the educated classes. But while they dismiss without a pang or an effort articles of faith which were only superficially imprinted on their minds by the weight of cultured opinion, the ignorant and foolish multitude cling with a sullen determination to far grosser beliefs which really answer to the coarser texture of their undeveloped intellect. Thus while the avowed creed of the enlightened minority is constantly changing under the influence of reflection and enquiry, the real, though unavowed, creed of the mass of mankind appears to be almost stationary, and the reason why it alters so little is that in the majority of men, whether they are savages or outwardly civilized beings, intellectual progress is so slow as to be hardly perceptible. The surface of society, like that of the sea, is in perpetual motion; its depths, like those of the ocean, remain almost unmoved.

The early history of mankind, reconstructed from the joint testimony of savagery and folk-lore, is full of gaps, which can only be imperfectly bridged by the Comparative Method.

Thus from an examination, first, of savagery and, second, of its survivals in civilization, the study of Social Anthropology attempts to trace the early history of human thought and institutions. The history can never be complete, unless science should discover some mode of reading the faded record of the past of which we in this generation can hardly dream. We know indeed that every event, however insignificant, implies a change, however slight, in the material constitution of the universe, so that the whole history of the world is, in a sense, engraved upon its face, though our eyes are too dim to read the scroll. It may be that in the future some wondrous reagent, some magic chemical, may yet be found to bring out the whole of nature's secret handwriting for a greater than Daniel to interpret to his fellows. That will hardly be in our time. With the resources at present at our command we must be content with a very brief, imperfect, and in large measure conjectural account of man's mental and social development in prehistoric ages.

As I have already pointed out, the evidence, fragmentary and dubious as it is, only runs back a very little way into the measureless past of human life on earth; we soon lose the thread, the faintly glimmering thread, in the thick darkness of the absolutely unknown. Even in the comparatively short space of time, a few thousand years at most, which falls more or less within our ken, there are many deep and wide chasms which can only be bridged by hypotheses, if the story of evolution is to run continuously. Such bridges are built in anthropology as in biology by the Comparative Method, which enables us to borrow the links of one chain of evidence to supply the gaps in another. For us who deal, not with the various forms of animal life, but with the various products of human intelligence, the legitimacy of the Comparative Method rests on the well-ascertained similarity of the working of the human mind in all races of men. I have laid stress on the great inequalities which exist not only between the various races, but between men of the same race and generation; but it should be clearly understood and remembered that these divergencies are quantitative rather than qualitative, they consist in differences of degree rather than of kind. The savage is not a different sort of being from his civilized brother: he has the same capacities, mental and moral, but they are less fully developed: his evolution has been arrested, or rather retarded, at a lower level. And as savage races are not all on the same plane, but have stopped or tarried at different points of the upward path, we can to a certain extent, by comparing them with each other, construct a scale of social progression and mark out roughly some of the stages on the long road that leads from savagery to civilization. In the kingdom of mind such a scale of mental evolution answers to the scale of morphological evolution in the animal kingdom.

The legitimacy of the Comparative Method in social anthropology rests on the similarity of the human mind in all races.

From what I have said I hope you have formed some idea of the extreme importance which the study of savage life possesses for a proper understanding of the early history of mankind. The savage is a human document, a record of man's efforts to raise himself above the level of the beast. It is only of late years that the full value of the document

It is only of late years that the importance of savagery as a document of human

has been appreciated; indeed, many people are probably still of Dr. Johnson's opinion, who, pointing to the three large volumes of *Voyages to the South Seas* which had just come out, said: "Who will read them through? A man had better work his way before the mast than read them through; they will be eaten by rats and mice before they are read through. There can be little entertainment in such books; one set of savages is like another."[1] But the world has learned a good deal since Dr. Johnson's day; and the records of savage life, which the sage of Bolt Court consigned without scruple to the rats and mice, have now their place among the most precious archives of humanity. Their fate has been like that of the Sibylline Books. They were neglected and despised when they might have been obtained complete; and now wise men would give more than a king's ransom for their miserably mutilated and imperfect remains. It is true that before our time civilized men often viewed savages with interest and described them intelligently, and some of their descriptions are still of great scientific value. For example, the discovery of America naturally excited in the minds of the European peoples an eager curiosity as to the inhabitants of the new world, which had burst upon their gaze, as if at the waving of a wizard's wand the curtain of the western sky had suddenly rolled up and disclosed scenes of glamour and enchantment. Accordingly some of the Spaniards who explored and conquered these realms of wonder have bequeathed to us accounts of the manners and customs of the Indians, which for accuracy and fulness of detail probably surpass any former records of an alien race. Such, for instance, is the great work of the Franciscan friar Sâhagun on the natives of Mexico, and such the work of Garcilasso de la Vega, himself half an Inca, on the Incas of Peru. Again, the exploration of the Pacific in the eighteenth century, with its revelation of fairy-like islands scattered in profusion over a sea of eternal summer, drew the eyes and stirred the imagination of Europe; and to the curiosity thus raised in many minds, though not in Dr. Johnson's, we owe some precious descriptions of the islanders, who, in those days of sailing ships, appeared to dwell so remote from us

history has been understood.

Great impulse given to the study of savagery by the discovery of America and of the Pacific.

[1] J. Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson*[9] (London, 1822), iv. 315.

that the poet Cowper fancied their seas might never again be ploughed by English keels.[1]

The passing of the savage.

These and many other old accounts of savages must always retain their interest and value for the study of Social Anthropology, all the more because they set before us the natives in their natural unsophisticated state, before their primitive manners and customs had been altered or destroyed by European influence. Yet in the light of subsequent research these early records are often seen to be very defective, because the authors, unaware of the scientific importance of facts which to the ordinary observer might appear trifling or disgusting, have either passed over many things of the highest interest in total silence or dismissed them with a brief and tantalizing allusion. It is accordingly necessary to supplement the reports of former writers by a minute and painstaking investigation of the living savages in order to fill up, if possible, the many yawning gaps in our knowledge. Unfortunately this cannot always be done, since many savages have either been totally exterminated or so changed by contact with Europeans that it is no longer possible to obtain trustworthy information as to their old habits and traditions. But whenever the ancient customs and beliefs of a primitive race have passed away unrecorded, a document of human history has perished beyond recall. Unhappily this destruction of the archives, as we may call it, is going on apace. In some places, for example, in Tasmania, the savage is already extinct; in others, as in Australia, he is dying. In others again, for instance in Central and Southern Africa, where the numbers and inborn vigour of the race shew little or no sign of succumbing in the struggle for existence, the influence of traders, officials, and missionaries is so rapidly disintegrating and effacing the native customs, that with the passing of the older generation even the memory of them will soon in many places be gone. It is therefore a matter of the most urgent scientific importance to secure without delay full and accurate reports of these perishing or changing peoples, to take permanent copies, so

1 "*In boundless oceans, never to be passed*
By navigators uninform'd as they,
Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again."
The Task, book i. 629 *sqq.*

to say, of these precious monuments before they are destroyed. It is not yet too late. Much may still be learned, for example, in West Australia, in New Guinea, in Melanesia, in Central Africa, among the hill tribes of India and the forest Indians of the Amazons. There is still time to send expeditions to these regions, to subsidize men on the spot, who are conversant with the languages and enjoy the confidence of the natives; for there are such men who possess or can obtain the very knowledge we require, yet who, unaware or careless of its inestimable value for science, make no effort to preserve the treasure for posterity, and, if we do not speedily come to the rescue, will suffer it to perish with them. In the whole range of human knowledge at the present moment there is no more pressing need than that of recording this priceless evidence of man's early history before it is too late. For soon, very soon, the opportunities which we still enjoy will be gone for ever. In another quarter of a century probably there will be little or nothing of the old savage life left to record. The savage, such as we may still see him, will then be as extinct as the dodo. The sands are fast running out: the hour will soon strike: the record will be closed: the book will be sealed. And how shall we of this generation look when we stand at the bar of posterity arraigned on a charge of high treason to our race, we who neglected to study our perishing fellow-men, but who sent out costly expeditions to observe the stars and to explore the barren ice-bound regions of the poles, as if the polar ice would melt and the stars would cease to shine when we are gone? Let us awake from our slumber, let us light our lamps, let us gird up our loins. The Universities exist for the advancement of knowledge. It is their duty to add this new province to the ancient departments of learning which they cultivate so diligently. Cambridge, to its honour, has led the way in equipping and despatching anthropological expeditions; it is for Oxford, it is for Liverpool, it is for every University in the land to join in the work.

The duty of our generation to posterity.

More than that, it is the public duty of every civilized state actively to co-operate. In this respect the United States of America, by instituting a bureau for the study of the aborigines within its dominions, has set an example

The duty of the State.

The duty of England.

which every enlightened nation that rules over lower races ought to imitate. On none does that duty, that responsibility, lie more clearly and more heavily than on our own, for to none in the whole course of human history has the sceptre been given over so many and so diverse races of men. We have made ourselves our brother's keepers. Woe to us if we neglect our duty to our brother! It is not enough for us to rule in justice the peoples we have subjugated by the sword. We owe it to them, we owe it to ourselves, we owe it to posterity, who will require it at our hands, that we should describe them as they were before we found them, before they ever saw the English flag and heard, for good or evil, the English tongue. The voice of England speaks to her subject peoples in other accents than in the thunder of her guns. Peace has its triumphs as well as war: there are nobler trophies than captured flags and cannons. There are monuments, airy monuments, monuments of words, which seem so fleeting and evanescent, that will yet last when your cannons have crumbled and your flags have mouldered into dust. When the Roman poet wished to present an image of perpetuity, he said that he would be remembered so long as the Roman Empire endured, so long as the white-robed procession of the Vestals and Pontiffs should ascend the Capitol to pray in the temple of Jupiter. That solemn procession has long ceased to climb the slope of the Capitol, the Roman Empire itself has long passed away, like the empire of Alexander, like the empire of Charlemagne, like the empire of Spain, yet still amid the wreck of kingdoms the poet's monument stands firm, for still his verses are read and remembered. I appeal to the Universities, I appeal to the Government of this country to unite in building a monument, a beneficent monument, of the British Empire, a monument

Monumentum aere perennius.

> " *Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens*
> *Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis*
> *Annorum series, et fuga temporum.*"

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